

VANISHED

At 5:54, Stephen Greer parked his car in the Burning Tree parking lot, walked to the locker room, changed his clothes (but not his shoes), picked up his clubs, and went out onto the course. Ten minutes later, the clubs were abandoned at Hole No. 4, and of the man himself, there was not a trace—anywhere! . . .

by Fletcher Knebel

□ We were three for lunch in the long, cool room: Stephen Greer, Miguel Loomis, and I. Greer motioned me to the oak chair on his left. That put Miguel on Greer's right at the heavy oak table, an unobtrusive bit of protocol that appeared to elude young Miguel.

Although I had known Stephen Greer fairly well for some years, this was the first time that I had been invited to lunch in the law-firm's private dining room in the Ring Building. The conditioned air provided a haven from Washington's late August heat, which stewed on the sidewalks and soft macadam of Connecticut Avenue seven stories below.

Only the intricate web of politics could bring the White House press secretary and Stephen Greer, a prominent attorney and close friend of President Paul Roubush, to this table to listen to a young physicist who had just passed his twenty-fifth birthday. Greer and I had canceled other luncheon appointments to meet here. That was a fascinating aspect of politics, simple enough if one knew the pattern, incomprehensible if one did not.

The key at this lunch was Miguel's father, Bernard Loomis. He was a blunt, flinty character, a phenomenal fundraiser for our party in California and thus a man who could expect any reasonable favor from the administration.

Miguel, who had a master's degree in physics, was spending a year in Washington on a fellowship at the Atomic Energy Commission as part of his work toward a doctorate.

"O.K., Mike," Greer said.

"Well," said Miguel, "you know I came here in June after getting my master's at Cal. Tech. There are five other men on fellowships in my section, all working on Ph.D.s as I am. The idea is to familiarize

us with how the Atomic Energy Commission works. Anyway, I was surprised to learn that two of the fellowship men not only get paid by the AEC, as I am, but also by another organization called . . ."

"Whoa!" Greer held up a hand. "Back up a minute. Who's paid by whom?"

"These six fellowships are AEC grants, paid directly by the commission. But two of the six of us also get extra money—a good deal of it, seventy-five hundred a year—from the Spruance Foundation."

"What foundation?" asked Greer.

"Spruance," said Miguel.

"I never heard of it," I said.

"I went to both of the men and asked them about it. One guy said the Spruance Foundation was an outfit that wanted to attract more bright, young fellows into physics by offering larger rewards. If I was interested, he said, he'd send one of the Spruance representatives around to talk to me. A couple of weeks later, a man of about forty-five or fifty, a good-looking guy, obviously well educated, called on me one night at the apartment. He said he was from Spruance and he had a proposition that might appeal to me for what he called 'patriotic motives.' All I really had to do for my money was to listen and remember what I heard about international developments and international ties of physicists. If I heard of some new line of work in Italy, or Israel or Russia, I was to report it. Also, Spruance wanted the names of American physicists who worked with foreign scientists, visited them socially, or traveled a lot."

"Did he give a name?" asked Greer.

"Yes," said Miguel. "Smith. The next day I went up to the Library of Congress and looked up Spruance in the directory of tax-exempt foundations. It isn't listed and never has been. I looked up 'Spruance Foundation' in the Washington phone book. No listing. I tried the New York directory, and saw a listing for 'Spruance Foundation' at an East Thirty-eighth Street address in New York City. So this Monday I went up there. Spruance was on the third floor. It turned out the 'foundation' was just one room, dirty windows, a filing cabinet, and a girl at a typewriter who didn't seem to have much to do. When I asked her who the officers were, she said there was only one, a Mr. Maury Rimmel of Washington."

"Maury Rimmel," repeated Greer. "I know Maury. He's a lobbyist around town. Plays golf out at Burning Tree."

MIGUEL NODDED. "I saw Rimmel. He was vague. He said Spruance was a group of public-spirited businessmen, giving liberally to the sciences. When I

asked him who the donors were, he hugged his chest and said they preferred to remain anonymous."

"I don't see why this concerns us, Mike," said Greer.

"I think a lot of young physicists are being secretly subsidized by the CIA," Miguel said, "and I think that's a hell of a sorry business and I think President Roudebush ought to knock it off."

"What makes you think it's the Agency?" asked Greer.

"It squares with the way the CIA has been known to operate."

"Assuming what you say is correct," asked Greer, "what's wrong with Central Intelligence subsidizing young physicists?"

"I'm a physicist, damn it," said Miguel. His dark face flushed. "We're trained to follow the truth wherever it leads, in a laboratory at Cal. Tech or in Moscow or Bucharest. We have to trust one another. How would you feel, if you were a leading physicist, if you found out that your young assistant on an experiment was really there to spy on you?"

"But if Spruance is really Agency money, the purpose must be in the national interest," said Greer.

"Just because it's the Government, it's in the national interest?" asked Miguel. "What business does the CIA have infiltrating the ranks of science? You can defend that kind of spook business if you want to, but I think it stinks."

Greer ate slowly for several minutes, then pushed his chair back from the table. "Mike," he said, "if what you surmise is true, I'd be inclined to agree with you. Right off, I see no earthly reason why the Agency should be using young physicists as a front for one of the Agency's 'black' operations. Gene? What do you think?"

"Ditto," I said. Ever since my days in newspaper city rooms, I had taken a dim view of the CIA. Now the Agency was a colossus, and some of the things I had learned about it since arriving at the White House more than three years ago increased my misgivings.

"Just what do you want us to do?" Greer asked Miguel.

"I hoped," said Miguel, "that you could persuade the President to order the CIA to drop the Spruance subsidy of physicists."

"Why don't you let Gene and me huddle over this and figure out the best way to approach the President," Greer said. "In the meantime, you just go ahead with your work at the AEC."

"O.K., Mr. Greer," Miguel arose at his place. "I'll just wait to hear from you. And thanks."

I SAID GOODBYE to Steve. He had seen the President two nights ago, on Tuesday, he said, and it was unfortunate he had not known then about Miguel's problem because he could have broached

the subject off-handedly in a social con-

I walked the seven blocks to the

White House and entered the west wing lobby, exchanging a few words with the newspapermen sitting on the green leather lounges.

When I draped my coat on the back of my office swivel chair, Jill's hair, as usual, was enfolding the telephone, and she was whispering into the mouthpiece.

How to explain Jill Nichols? She had been whispering into that same phone for more than three years. Once we counted the calls for a week and found she murmured, "Mr. Culligan's office," ninety-three times a day.

Jill's hairdo was ridiculous. Her hair was blond, trimmed in severe bangs, straight to her shoulders. She was twenty-four years old, but she resembled one of those teen-age girls who wear black boots and white stockings and talk obscurely about being unable to "relate" to anyone. She came to the press office right out of Swarthmore.

I could not fire her because she was tormentingly efficient, somewhat like a clock that strikes regularly on the wrong hour, and, more important, I was in love with her. I say "in love" because I was not sure whether I loved her. I was thirty-eight—or fourteen years older than Jill—and had no hankering to become known as the poor man's William O. Douglas. Also, those fourteen years could have been three generations between us. I was a political p.r. man. Jill's world teemed with art shows, introspective novels by Yugoslavs and Chileans, classic Spanish guitar, vacations at unknown islands, and off-beat friends who spent their time groping for identity. Jill's best friend was her roommate, Butter Nygaard. In her spare time, Butter twisted iron into pornographic shapes and smoked pot.

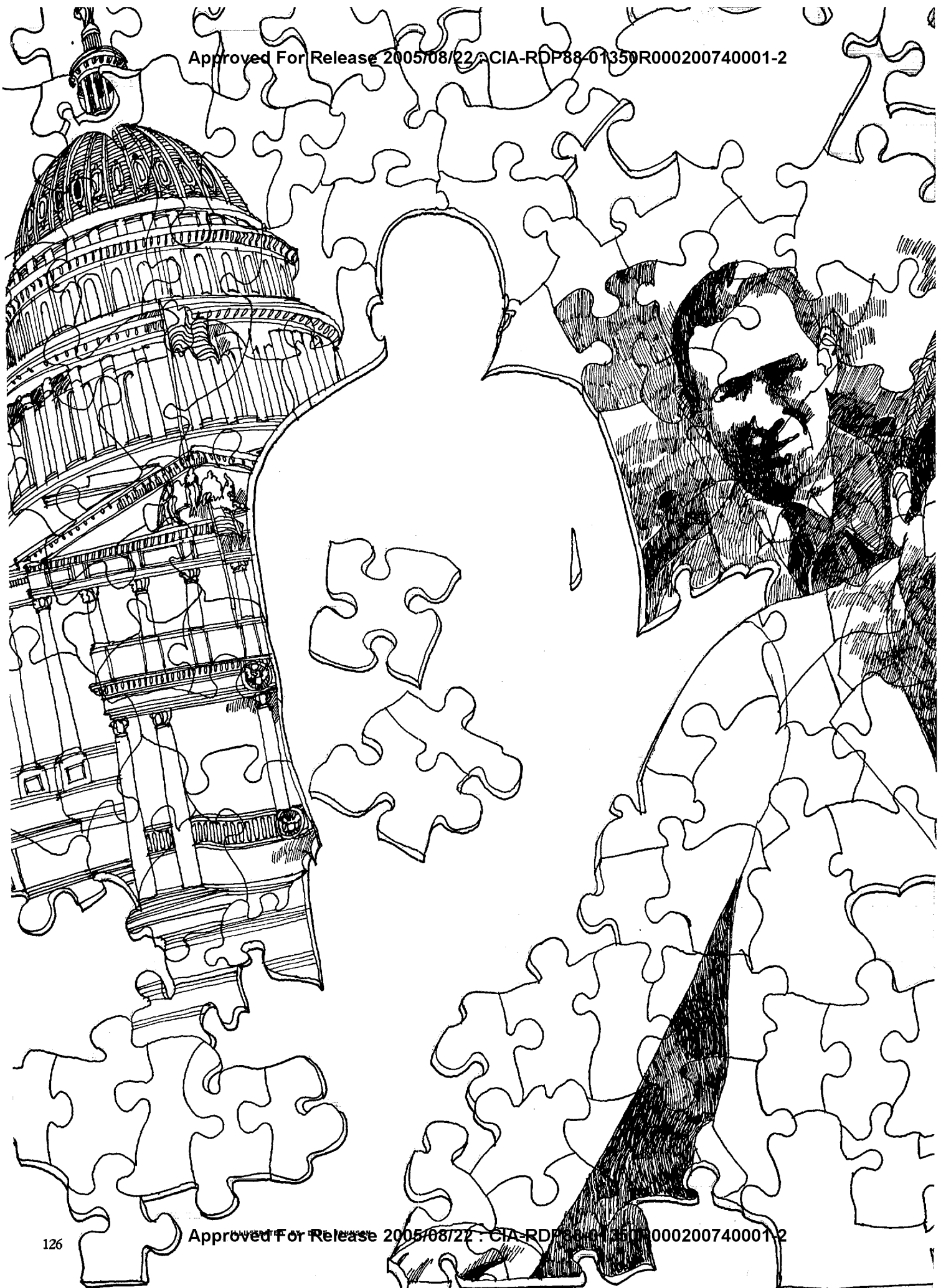
I didn't understand Jill, but she fascinated me. I saw her as many nights as I could, and sometimes, when Butter was making the scene somewhere, I spent the night at Jill's apartment in Georgetown. I felt guilty at times for monopolizing Jill and keeping her off the marriage market, but she said that was her worry.

"How's Miguel?" asked Jill. "Butter would like to see more of him. She calls him the Aztec Apollo. Butter says he has the most beautiful body she ever saw."

"I didn't know she saw that much of it," I said. Then I told Jill about the meeting with Greer and Loomis. What Jill heard, she did not repeat.

I had my own backed-up calls to return and I worked until three-thirty, when the President informed me on the green phone that he was ready for me.

THE THOUGHT that invariably struck me when I entered the oval office over-





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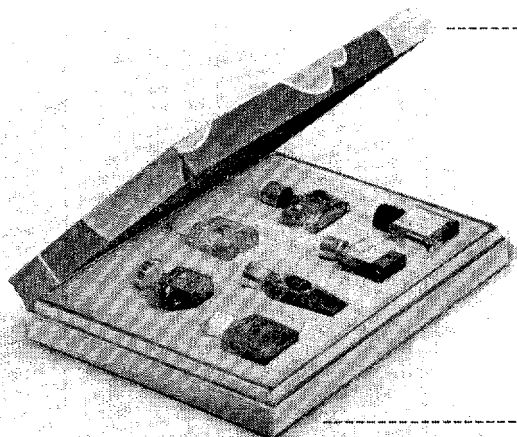
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looking the rose garden was that Paul Roudebush looked like a President. He was tall and big-framed, yet with little excess poundage and no paunch. His thick hair, once black, was now almost all gray. He was a plain man at core. His mental processes were uncomplicated. He became angry, openly, but he seldom brooded. He reached decisions with reasonable speed and he wasted little time bemoaning his errors.

There was a naïve quality about him that I am sure the voters sensed and found appealing. He believed in progress, in man's ability to improve his own nature, and in a bundle of allied concepts from the American ethic heritage that I had long since soured on.

When I entered his office, he put down a paper he was reading, and pushed his spectacles up.

"What are the boys worrying about today?"

I ticked off a half-dozen items. August had been placid for the Roudebush administration, the minority party making most of the headlines with its Houston convention and the nomination of Governor Stanley Wolcott of Illinois as the candidate to oppose Roudebush at the November election.

The President said: "I got a phone call from Steve. He told me about Miguel Loomis's problem and said you'd supply the details."

I told him about the luncheon meeting in Steve Greer's office and Miguel Loomis's suspicions.

"Spruance," the President said, testing the word. "Physicists. Is that name familiar to you, Gene?"

"No, sir. I never heard of it before."

He sat quietly, thinking, for a moment. "Gene, if this is a CIA operation. I know nothing about it. I want to hear what Arthur has to say." He flipped the key on his intercom box that connected with Grace Lalley, his secretary. "Grace, please call Arthur Ingram and set up an appointment here for 4:30 tomorrow. Thanks." The President settled back in his chair. "I want you in here, too," he said.

Roudebush had inherited Arthur Victor Ingram from the previous administration. Ingram's following was so strong and influential that to dismiss him would be to provoke instant battle. Private dining rooms in the CIA's secluded fortress in wooded Langley, Virginia, were the scenes of weekly dinners where congressmen were served deftly filtered secrets of the intelligence agency along with the prime ribs and strawberry mousse. Ingram's command suites and those of his deputy director occupied most of the top floor on the front side of the building which stretched as long as an aircraft carrier.

I arose to leave and the President said: "Gene, I hope you won't mind staying late tonight. I'd like you to sit in on the first draft of my Labor Day

opener. I'm not satisfied with the initial

suggestion. "Neither am I," I said. "Sure, I'll be glad to stay. I'd like to put my oar in."

And so it was that I was working late that night on the second floor of the west wing when I received the puzzling telephone call from Mrs. Susannah Greer, Steve's wife.

WHEN SUSANNAH GREER RETURNED to the old brick house on Brookside Drive in Kenwood about six o'clock that evening, she remembered it was Thursday, Steve's day for after-work golf, for last night had been his Wednesday Potomac Study Club night. He usually arrived from Burning Tree, Washington's all-male golf course, about seven-thirty.

But tonight, seven-thirty came, and then eight, and finally eight-thirty, without him. Reluctantly, she dialed the telephone number of Burning Tree.

"This is Mrs. Stephen Greer. I'd like to speak to my husband please, if he's still there."

"I'll switch you to the bar." The line stuttered a moment, then a heavy voice said: "Nineteenth hole."

"This is Mrs. Stephen Greer. May I speak to Mr. Greer please?"

"Oh, Sue. This is Maury Rimmel." The voice had a whiskey heartiness. "Steve isn't here. Just Joe Hopkinson and myself, finishing up a gin game."

"I was trying to locate Steve."

"Hey, Joe." Rimmel was talking across the room. "When did Steve Greer finish up?"

The answer was indistinct to Sue. Then Rimmel said: "We don't remember seeing Steve since we saw him at number one about six. Why don't I go see if his car is still in the lot."

It was five minutes before Rimmel returned to the phone. "Look, Sue, the car's still out in the parking lot, but Steve's nowhere around the clubhouse. Joe and I checked his locker and we found his suit hanging in there. On the other hand, his golf shoes are in the locker too. Then Joe remembered that when we saw Steve at the first tee, he was wearing his street shoes."

"And nobody's seen him since six?" She was upset now. "Could something have happened to him out on the course?"

"Tell you what, Sue. Joe and I'll get a cart and a flashlight and have a look around."

Susannah Greer slowly replaced the receiver, aware that anxiety was flooding the initial flowering of relief. The golf bag . . . the golf shoes and the street clothes in Steve's locker. Could he have been summoned suddenly to the White House?

She walked swiftly to the hall telephone and dialed 465-1414.

"Hello." It was the raspy voice of the White House press secretary. "This

is Gene Culligan, Mrs. Greer. Can I

"Is Steve there?"

"Is he supposed to be here?"

"He was supposed to be home at seven-thirty and I haven't heard from him."

"Let me give the agent on the night detail a ring. Maybe Steve's with the President." A minute dragged by. "No," said Culligan. "Steve hasn't been around tonight. I had lunch with him this noon, and he mentioned he was swamped."

"Oh," said Sue. "Thanks, Gene."

Sue walked slowly back to the living room, her arms folded against the night chill. The phone rang. She wheeled and ran to the hall again.

"Mrs. Greer?" asked an unfamiliar male voice.

"Yes. This is Susannah Greer."

"Mrs. Greer, I have a message for you. I will read it slowly: Quote. Dearest Sue: Please don't worry, Cubby. Have faith in me. I'll return when I can, but may take time. I love you. Unquote."

"Who is this?" But in mid-question she heard the telephone click at the other end.

THE FIRST BLUE-STREAK EDITION of the Friday, August 27, Washington *Evening Star* carried a three-column photograph of Stephen Greer on page one. The story ran a column on the front page and four more inside.

The article disclosed the disappearance of Greer, a five-hour search of the Burning Tree Club grounds by police, and the surmise of Chief Thad Wilson, of the Metropolitan Police, that Greer probably walked off the course about 8 P.M. Thursday. The writer said that Miguel Loomis, a young friend of the family, had been enlisted as a liaison man between Mrs. Greer and the press.

The article reported the widespread police opinion that Greer had disappeared voluntarily.

Stephen Byfield Greer is regarded as one of the leading attorneys of the District of Columbia bar and is a senior partner in the prominent firm of Greer, Hilstrater, Tomlin & DeLuca. He has practiced law here since his graduation, third in his class, from Columbia University Law School.

The disappearance, unless quickly resolved, could have national implications in view of the upcoming presidential campaign. President Paul Roudebush is slated to open his campaign for re-election eleven days hence with a Labor Day speech in Chicago. Gov. Stanley Wolcott of Illinois, the opposition candidate nominated at the recent Houston convention, will kick off his campaign the same day in Detroit's Cadillac Square.

Greer has been close to President Roudebush since the President's terms in the Senate and was an adviser during the successful Roudebush presidential campaign.

At his desk on the Senate floor, Sena-

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for Governor Wolcott, leaned toward his colleague on the right.

"What do you make of this Greer business?" Moffat asked.

"It's a puzzler," said the other senator.

"A close friend of a President of the United States doesn't disappear at the outset of a presidential campaign unless he's in bad trouble," agreed Moffat.

I LOOKED AT MY NOTES on the square, lined pad. A dozen items all began with the same symbol: G. We were nearing the end of one of the most hectic days in months.

"Let's get them in here, Jill," I said.

Jill's desk looked like a typhoon had swept it. As ever, she was whispering into the telephone. The long hair dripped to her shoulders. She brushed at the hair, finished her low conversation, moved across the room, straightened my desk sign, which read simply, "Culligan," and planted a prim kiss on my forehead.

She walked with her sinuous, boneless flow. Opening the door, she called, "Press!" in that fey voice of a child, then stepped back quickly to avoid the surging tide of journalism.

The newsmen swarmed around my desk. The normal contingent of thirty White House regulars had swelled to more than a hundred men and women.

"No announcements," I said, "except that the President is keeping all appointments on the list." (Arthur Ingram's 4:30 call was off-the-record and thus had not been posted.) "So let's go to questions."

"Greer. What else?" said Dave Paulick, who wrote and edited *D.P.'s Dossier*, a newsletter of fifty-thousand circulation which specialized in uncorking Washington scandals.

"We don't know any more about the situation than you do, Dave. The President is following the police reports as they come in. We know, naturally, that Stephen Greer has disappeared. Beyond that, we're stymied."

"Has the President spoken to Mrs. Greer?"

"Yes. He expressed his concern to Mrs. Greer and, of course, offered to help in any way he can."

"Look, Gene, can't we quote you direct somehow on just how the President is taking this?"

I glanced at the note pad. "You can quote me directly on this one thing. Quote. President Roudebush is deeply concerned. Stephen Greer is one of his best friends as well as a trusted, if unofficial, adviser. Naturally, therefore, the President's concern is a personal one and he looks forward to an early solution. Unquote."

"When did the President last talk to him?"

"Tuesday night," I said. "Greer came to the house after dinner for a talk."

"What about?"

"I don't know."

THE QUESTIONS PULSED for another five minutes while Jill stood with her back to the door, guardian nymph of the exit. Had the FBI been called in? No. So far no indication of a violation of federal law. What was Greer advising on currently? General policy. Had Greer ever been to a psychiatrist? Don't know, but think implications of question are out of order. Had any tips been phoned to the White House? Yes. Mostly cranks, but the Secret Service recorded them all and passed on a few leads to the police.

Jill, smiling beatifically, opened the door. The herd stampeded to the lobby. Her pale lipstick against white skin made her appear unusually delicate in the rude crush of bodies.

Jill closed the door and turned to me.

"Have I told you today that I'm very fond of you?"

"You sound like my kid sister."

"Tell me more at my place tonight. Butter has a date. Right?"

"Right."

I watched as she settled in her padded swivel chair.

The buzzer on my green phone, my direct line to the President's office, set off a low, steady drone. Grace Lalley said: "Arthur Ingram's waiting. The President says he'd like you in here, if you've finished with the newsmen."

Arthur Ingram was already seated in the oval office when I entered. He nodded to me—curtly, I thought. The No. 1 intelligence man was immaculately groomed as always, his trousers sharply creased and his crossed feet shod in cordovans with a gleaming polish. Ingram held his rimless spectacles in his hands. The narrow, tanned face wore an expression of wary confidence. Ingram was an adroit, intense, aloof man. His personality traits were the opposite of Roudebush's candor, forthrightness, and warmth.

The President was leaning back in his chair. I sensed a tension in the room.

"Have a chair, Gene," he said. "I've merely told Arthur that I wanted to discuss the Agency's operations among scientists. Why don't you just sketch the affair as you did for me yesterday."

"Yes, sir," I said. "Yesterday noon I and Miguel Loomis, the son of the Educational Micro president, had luncheon in the Ring Building with Steve Greer."

I told the story as Miguel related it the day before, adding for Ingram's benefit a few words about the political importance of Miguel's father, Barney. When finished, Ingram's eyes left mine and went inquiringly to those of the President.

"Well, Arthur," said the President in a pleasant tone, "what about it?"

"Except for a few unimportant details," said Ingram, "the story is correct as far as it goes. We initiated the atomic scientists' project last fall and used the Spruance Foundation as a conduit for funds."

"Does this project have an Agency name?"

"Yes," said Ingram. He colored slightly. "Operation Flycatcher."

"And why was I not informed of this?" asked the President.

"Because of our quite explicit understanding at our first session after you took office," said Ingram swiftly. "You said you wanted to be consulted on broad policy, on major new undertakings of a sensitive nature, but that you could not and would not deal in day-to-day details of Agency operation."

"Is Operation Flycatcher confined to young men, or have you also tried to recruit some older nuclear scientists?"

"So far," said Ingram, "we have confined it to men working on masters' and doctors' degrees. We hope, of course, that many of these men will continue to serve the Agency throughout their careers."

"Who is this Mr. Rimmel, who heads Spruance for you?" asked the President. "A Maury Rimmel is a member at Burning Tree, the one who searched for Steve last night. Is that the man?"

"Yes, sir. A number of businessmen cooperate with us, as you know, some without compensation, some for a fee. Rimmel is paid a fee."

It occurred to me that Ingram would find it quite handy to have a man on a CIA retainer circulating at Burning Tree. The implication was Machiavellian, of course, and I wondered if I were being overly suspicious.

ROUDEBUSH AROSE, pushed his hands into his coat pockets, and walked to the French doors. He stood for a moment, gazing at the back of a Secret Service man on duty on the outside walkway.

"Arthur," he said when he turned to us again, "why isn't it possible to obtain the same information you get from the young scientists via normal embassy and Agency channels?"

"I just don't believe we'd get the same kind of result," said Ingram.

The President returned to his desk. "The CIA wouldn't be exactly crippled if we ended this operation?"

"Crippled, no," Ingram flushed under his tan. "Handicapped, yes."

"Suppose I had a son, and suppose he, as a young physicist, had been approached by your people. What would my son say to me when he found out that the CIA was infiltrating the ranks of his colleagues? I think if I were in Miguel Loomis's shoes, I'd be just as disturbed as he is."

"I take it you want Operation Flycatcher dismantled," said Ingram.

"I do," Roudebush smiled.

"I respect your wishes, sir, and although I do not agree with you, the Spruance support of Flycatcher will be terminated and the project closed down."

"Good," said the President. "I appreciate your cooperation, Arthur."

Ingram arose and folded his unused glasses into the leather case at his breast pocket. "I'm sorry about Stephen Greer," he said. "I know it must be a shock to you, Mr. President. If the Agency can help in any way, please call me at once."

"Thank you, Arthur. For the moment, I think we should let the police handle the case."

As Roudebush walked Ingram to the door, he indicated by a nod that I was to remain. He returned to sit on the corner of his desk. "Gene," he said, "can you give me one good reason why Ingram should be using graduate students in physics as servants of the Agency?"

"Frankly, Mr. President, in my book that Spruance-Flycatcher operation is a crude, cynical business."

He nodded. "The whole CIA has gotten out of hand. Subsidizing intellectuals and labor leaders, buying up university research brains, fomenting revolutions, clandestine paramilitary operations—a whole ball of wax that was never contemplated when the Agency was set up to gather vital information abroad." He paused. "Follow this CIA situation, Gene. Make notes of what I tell you."

THERE WAS A KNOCK on the door. Grace Lalley tucked her head into the room. "I think you may want to take this one, Mr. President," she said. "It's from Police Chief Wilson about Mr. Greer." The President answered the phone.

He listened a moment, then said as he hung up: "A ten-year-old boy who lives on Burdette Road says he saw a man being helped into a car last night a little after eight o'clock near the Burning Tree fence. He thinks that altogether there were a total of three men at the car."

"I suppose that means the FBI," I said.

Roudebush looked up quickly. "You mean kidnapping. Yes, I suppose it does raise that possibility. I'd better call Deskowicz."

I stood up. "If the FBI comes into it, I'd appreciate a call. I couldn't hold out on the boys on that one."

"Of course not," he said. "I'll get to you in a few minutes."

As I entered my office, Jill handed me a yellow sheet, torn from the UPI ticker.

UPI-184
(Greer-Finance)

New York: Stocks broke sharply today in the wake of the unexplained disappearance

MEET THE
**Honey
Edwardian**
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ABOUT \$33 SIZES 3-15

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the
Lovin'
Kind!*

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VANISHED [continued]

ance of Stephen B. Greer, close friend of President Roudebush.

Brokers attributed the surge of late selling to the "unsettling Greer news" from Washington, but generally predicted a rally Monday since all business indices still point upward and economists are universally bullish.

8/27—MJJ409PED

It was an hour later when I received my expected call from the President. I turned to my typewriter, rattled off my two-finger ballet, then asked Jill to summon the troops again. The army, only slightly depleted, clattered into my office. I held up the sheet on which I had been typing.

"Quote. President Roudebush has requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation to join the search for Stephen B. Greer. FBI Director Peter Deskowicz has assigned a task force of special agents to the investigation. This does not mean that we believe Greer was kidnapped. It is merely a possibility being explored. Close quote. That's it."

PETER DESKOWICZ sat in his office in the new FBI building on Pennsylvania Avenue. Opposite him, Special Agent Clyde Moorhead held a sheaf of papers on his lap.

"Greer had a full field three years ago when the President wanted him cleared for defense policy meetings," Moorhead said.

Deskowicz fingered his own copy of the investigative file. He was a stout, wan, deliberate man whose instinct for caution guided him through the reefs of bureaucratic struggle. "Clyde, you know how sensitive this is. With the President up for re-election, and Wolcott's people scratching around for anything that might damage Roudebush... we're on the spot."

"I know what you mean," said Moorhead.

"You're to report directly to me."

"O.K. What about getting Greer's tax returns from IRS?"

Deskowicz made a note on a pad. "I'll have to check that out first with The Man." He thought a moment, then made another note. "Let's call the Greer case 'Ajax.'"

Moorhead stood up. "I'd better get with it," he said, adding caustically, "if we're to clean up Ajax by Christmas."

IN MANY HOMES around the country that night people studied the television shots and the front-page pictures of Stephen Greer.

In a small, stone house of French Provencal style on Battle Road in Princeton, New Jersey, Deborah Kissich showed the picture to her husband, Felix.

"Isn't that the man who came here to the house last fall?"

Kissich adjusted his steel-frame glasses and peered at the picture of the happy golfer. It "does resemble him remarkably." He still spoke with a trace of Hungarian accent. Years in the United States had not erased it completely. "But no. See, Deb, these eyes are different. They are set wide apart. The man who visited here had eyes very close together. And his chin was more pointed."

"What was his name?"

"Martin, Morton," he said. "Something-or-other Morton. I think. Mr. Something Morton from the National Science Foundation."

DAVE PAULICK stopped his car approximately at the spot where Greer vanished, made a note of the mileage on his speedometer, then drove to the nearest airport marked on his map. It was the Montgomery County Airpark at Gaithersburg. Paulick noted the distance between club and airfield, sixteen miles, and the driving time. It took him twenty-one minutes.

Darkness was settling when he entered the operations building. A man in coveralls stood behind the counter.

"Say, I'm Paulick of D.P.'s Dossier. I wonder if you could help me? Did a plane take off from here about eight-twenty last night, give or take a few minutes?"

"A Beechcraft Baron took off at eight thirty-five. Belongs to Brubaker."

"Who's Brubaker?"

"Arnie Brubaker. He's a charter pilot around here. Lives over on Barnaby Road in Bethesda."

"When did he come back?"

"He hasn't."

SPECIAL AGENT LAWRENCE STORM skimmed the Monday-morning *Washington Post* with half his mind. There were interviews with Burning Tree caddies about Greer, a statement from Press Secretary Culligan attempting to calm Wall Street before the market opening, quotes from Miguel Loomis on Mrs. Greer's feelings of the moment. As far as the press knew, Stephen Greer could have dropped off the lip of an unknown canyon.

And, thought Larry Storm, he knew little more than the press did. Oh, he had learned plenty about Stephen Greer, including his pet nickname, "Cubby," for his wife, but nothing about Greer's Wednesday night habits. Mrs. Susannah Greer had told Storm about the Potomac Study Club during their three-hour talk, Saturday morning. Club membership and meeting places were secret; Greer had been attending sessions for a year; Mrs. Greer knew absolutely nothing about them. He had reported promptly via car radio to Clyde Moorhead, the task force chief, and received the green light to check out the study group.

By late Sunday night Storm had seen half the Roudebush cabinet, most of the little cabinet, and a dozen political acquaintances of Greer. Not one had heard of a Potomac Study Club which met Wednesday nights or any other nights. His sixth sense told Larry Storm that the Potomac Study Club was a phantom.

At that moment, his phone rang. Even at 7:45 A.M., it was hard to keep one step ahead of Clyde Moorhead.

"A woman called in late last night," Moorhead said. "Says she saw Greer's picture in the paper. Claims he's the same man she saw a couple of times in an R Street apartment. The Wilmarth."

THE WILMARTH was a five-story apartment house two blocks off Connecticut Avenue. Nothing luxurious, but clean and well-tended.

The name plate on 4-C read BEVERLY WEST. Storm rang the bell. A woman opened the door for him, closing it slowly behind his back. She wore a loose, white blouse, pink Capri pants that hugged her legs like sausage skins, and pink spike-heeled mules.

"I didn't know they had Negro agents," she said.

"Once a slave, always a slave," he said.

He took several three-by-five photographs of Stephen Greer from his jacket pocket and handed them to her.

"That's the cat," she said.

"Now, if you could just tell me when and where you saw Mr. Greer?"

"I've seen him around here three times, I think. The first time, last fall, this other guy, the little one, comes to my door, accusing me of having the record player up too high."

"Pardon me," said Storm. "What other man?"

"Oh, there are two of them across the hall in 4-D," she said, "the little creep and the big one, this Greer."

"You mean both live across the hall?"

"How do I know if they live there? I've only seen them at night, three times, like I said. After the first time I never saw neither of them until March."

"And what happened then?"

"I came home about eight-thirty one night, and the bigger one, this Greer, I know it is now, he's standing at the door of 4-D fiddling with the lock. He said, 'I've got the wrong key.' Then he found the right key and opened the door. So that was it until last week one night. I was coming in around midnight and this Greer was just leaving. He kind of bows and leaves by the elevator. When I saw Greer's picture in the paper, I started thinking. So I called the FBI."

"We appreciate your cooperation, Miss West," said Storm. "Do you remember what night it was last week that you saw both men?"

"Wednesday. Maybe just a little after twelve."

Then Storm interviewed the resident manager. Apartment 4-D had been rented, furnished, for \$175 a month, for a year beginning last September 1. Lease up day after tomorrow, Wednesday. The lessee was the Crown Arts Co., 939 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, and the signature on the lease was that of David Klingman, same address.

ON A HUNCH, he asked the manager, "Where's the nearest parking garage?"

"Around the corner to your right."

The young man on duty in the garage's glass cubicle blinked at the FBI card. He did remember a small man with dark-rimmed glasses. Thought he used the garage about once a week. Tags? Not sure, but thought they were Maryland plates.

The time-stamped parking cards were sent to the central office the first of each month, said the day duty man, so he still had those for August. Storm culled out the four Thursdays in August.

One license number, a Maryland tag, appeared early on each Thursday, at 12:50 A.M., 1:03, 12:57. Last Thursday, August 26, the car left the garage at 1:08 A.M.

Larry called Moorhead on the radio phone. "Do me a favor, and ask the Baltimore office to check motor vehicles over there for Maryland tag number MQ 4472."

"Take five and call me back."

When Storm called again, Moorhead reported briskly: "Maryland passenger vehicle license number MQ 4472 is registered to a Phillip Jacob Lubin. The address registered is 3333 North Charles Street, Baltimore, and our Baltimore office says that's near the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus. The college proper."

AN HOUR LATER IN BALTIMORE, Storm parked near the N. Charles Street address, another apartment building named the Charles Apartments.

"Can I help you?" asked the receptionist.

"I'm looking for Phillip Lubin."

"He's on vacation," said the woman. "He left yesterday, and he won't be back until goodness knows when. Took a long automobile trip out West and up into Canada. He's in the mathematics department at the university."

"Who's head of the mathematics department, miss?"

"Dr. Winthrop."

The Bureau card quickly admitted Larry to the office of Dr. Henry Winthrop.

"Dr. Winthrop," said Storm, "I have to check out Dr. Phillip Lubin rather carefully. I'd appreciate your cooperation for a few minutes."

Storm jotted down his notes. Lubin

was a linguist. German, Danish, Chinese, French, and even a dab of some obscure African throat tongue, Winthrop thought. Lubin unmarried.

"Just one thing, Dr. Winthrop," Storm said. "This is delicate, I know, but actually the question is routine. Do you have any reason to believe Dr. Lubin's sexual habits are anything but normal?"

"That has never been a concern of this department. I suppose you mean something other than heterosexuality?"

"Yes," said Larry. "Any indication of homosexual tendencies?"

"I would say not."

"How about his friends? I'd like a list of them for a routine check."

Winthrop named several faculty members, a Baltimore doctor, a blind woman to whom Lubin read once a week. Larry noted there was no mention of Stephen Greer.

Winthrop chuckled. "Oh yes, and Eugene Culligan, the White House press secretary."

When Storm finished work that night, fatigued and out of fuel at 10 P.M., he had covered every parking lot and garage in the inner circle. He was out on the street again by 8:30 A.M. Tuesday and working his rounds. His shoes were dirty and his calves ached when he entered an underground parking garage called Sol's Metro Park. Storm showed his card and asked his question, and the fleshy attendant jerked his head to the left. "There it is against the wall."

"I'd like to see the claim check."

The man fingered a card file, withdrew a two-by-four white ticket. Storm recorded the data in his memo pad: Sol's Metro Park. Time-stamped in at 11:52 A.M., Aug. 29. In ink was scrawled: "Mustang MQ 4472, Phillip J. Lubin. Monthly rental, \$40 rate. Receipt given for \$100 cash deposit. Indefinite storage."

Larry called Moorhead. "Dr. L. isn't on a motor trip. He stored his car, indefinitely, at a cruddy parking garage in east Baltimore, a long way from home."

WEDNESDAY MORNING at the White House press office opened as if jarred awake by a clamor of gongs, and the discord swelled until our shop resembled an orchestra pit seized by mad musicians. Everyone wanted to talk Greer, Greer, Greer. *The Wall Street Journal* proposed to do a take-out on me and Miguel Loomis, undoubtedly under the headline, "The Last Lunch."

The White House correspondents in the lobby all hammered at Jill, demanding personal time with me, but I put Dave Paulick at the head of the list. She brought him in.

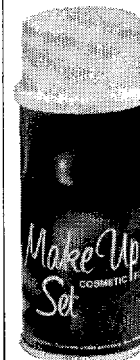
"Where's Greer?" he asked. "Do you know where he is?"

"No."

He relaxed—slightly. "Well," he said, "I know where he went—or at least

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VANISHED [continued]

where he went partway. Steve Greer flew out of Montgomery County Airport at Gaithersburg in a Beechcraft Baron last Thursday night at eight thirty-five. The pilot said he was going to Raleigh-Durham, but instead he flew to Atlantic City. Greer switched planes and flew to Kennedy in a Cessna Sky-night. He left Kennedy at about midnight on a jet cargo job operated by Overseas Quick-Freight, Inc. The flight plan called for a nonstop to Rio de Janeiro. Greer, now using the name Fairchild, was the only passenger."

I was stunned. Steve Greer flying secretly to Rio? Why? "Are you printing it?"

"No. The *Dossier* goes in Monday nights, remember? Maybe next week. Maybe not. Depends where this leads."

"Where you off to?" I asked.

"Rio. Where else?"

Jill crossed the room to me in a silent glide. "What are you going to do?"

"Tell the President. Aside from that, nothing."

My staff phone was ringing. I picked up the receiver. An FBI agent named Lawrence Storm wanted to see me. I said to send him up. I knew that Larry Storm, a Negro, was one of Deskowicz's top special agents, but I was unprepared for the man who entered. He was quite wide in the shoulders, then trimly tapered, the build of an athlete. He had skin the color of cocoa and a bearing of serene confidence.

"I know you by reputation," I said. "It's a pleasure. Have a seat."

He accepted. "I'm checking out a Dr. Phillip J. Lubin and I understand you know him."

"Sure," I said.

Storm asked me all the usual questions. I told him that Phil and I became friendly at the University of Chicago when Lubin was my graduate instructor in a third-year math course. I thought Phil was eccentric, moody sometimes, but undeniably a brain. After college, I lost touch except for a couple of phone calls when Phil came through L.A. Then in the Roudebush campaign, Phil called on me to offer aid. Since my arrival at the White House, I'd had lunch or dinner with him maybe once every four or five months. In fact, I had dinner with him not too many nights ago. That was about it.

"Do you recall what night you last had dinner?"

"August 25," said Jill. "At the Hay-Adams."

"A Wednesday night, wasn't it?" Storm asked.

"Yeah," I said. "It was the night before Steve Greer disappeared."

"Have you ever heard of a discussion group of administration officials called the Potomac Study Club?"

"Nope."

"Gene," he asked, "what do you know about Dr. Lubin's relations with women?"

"You mean is he a fag? I don't think so," I said. "Say, what does all this have to do with Steve Greer?"

"I wish you wouldn't make that assumption," he said. He looked genuinely distressed.

I WALKED OVER TO THE DOOR with him. "Listen, Larry, I'm really in the dark on this Greer case. I hear a report that Steve flew to Brazil last week. What do you hear?"

I could see the remark jolted him.

"You're in the dark!"

When the door closed, I turned to Jill. "Now what do you suppose that last crack meant?"

She frowned. "Well, it sounded as though he didn't know anything either. Do you suppose that Dr. Lubin has disappeared too?"

"Get Phil's home number in Baltimore from your book. Let me talk to him."

Moments later she had a wide-eyed, wondering look. "Both the apartment and the math department say Dr. Lubin left Sunday on a long auto trip out West. They don't know where to reach him."

We looked at each other with shared awareness. Greer and Lubin both gone.

I called Grace Lalley, asked to see the President soonest--about Greer.

The President was bent over a memorandum when I entered.

"It's about Steve," I said. I gave him the highlights.

"Mmm. Gene, what's your guess on all this?"

"Putting two and two together, after Jill found that Lubin left on an auto trip, there's at least a possibility that Greer and Phil Lubin may be somewhere together. Storm's last questions hinted at perversion."

The President leaned forward. "That, of course, is preposterous."

"Yes, sir."

"I already knew of this development. It was included in Deskowicz's report this morning."

"Did Steve and Phil Lubin know each other?"

"Gene," the President said after an unusually lengthy pause. "I think we had better reach an understanding on this matter. Until all the facts are in, I'd rather not discuss piecemeal aspects. I'm afraid you'll just have to bear with me for a while."

I could feel my temper rising. "Mr. President, I figured I was to level with the press on Greer, and to do that I have to know what's going on." I hesitated. "At the least, I ought to know what the Bureau is reporting to you."

"I'm sorry, Gene," he said. "That cannot be done at this stage."

"I don't like it, Mr. President," I said. "And you might as well know exactly how I feel. Suddenly, I'm not your press secretary. I'm a damn palace eunuch."

He came quickly around the desk, threw an arm around my shoulders and, with barely perceptible pressure, began moving me toward the door.

"Please live with it for now," he said, "as a personal favor to me. This should all be cleared up before long."

"If it's tomorrow," I retorted, "it won't be a day too soon."

I closed the door sharply.

Jill could read the results on my face. "Trouble?"

"Yes. He wants me to play deaf, dumb, and blind on Greer. What's more, he won't tell me a thing. Period."

ARTHUR INGRAM kept his private office largely as he had inherited it from his predecessors. The furniture was heavy, male, upholstered in brown leather. The paintings were inoffensive, their hues blending with the drapes and the brown nap of the carpeting.

A mahogany cabinet behind his desk held a battery of five telephones. The gray phone connected him with his platoon of experts within the building. The cream phone and push-button box was the instrument for ordinary communications, save for two red buttons which marked secure channels within the Agency. The black telephone connected Ingram with the White House switchboard and from there, to the world. The green phone was his private line to the Pentagon. At the end of the cabinet sat his small blue phone, the direct line to the President's office. He lifted the blue receiver. The buzzer sounded on the desk of Grace Lalley. A moment later, the President's hearty voice said, "Good morning, Arthur."

"Mr. President," said Ingram, "I'm bothering you only because this is a matter of concern to you. It's about Stephen Greer. I have just received information that he flew to Rio de Janeiro by several apparently secret stages last Thursday night. I assume you'd like the full attention of the Agency on this."

There was a moment of silence on the line. "No," said Roudebush. "I think not, Arthur. Involving the whole Agency right now would place too much government emphasis on what is, really, a private matter."

"The Agency is not to help then?"

"No, not at this time. If that changes, I'll notify you at once, naturally."

Ingram hung up. The gulf in his understanding was widened by the memorandum which Nick, his director of intelligence, had sent him that morning.

FROM: Nick

TO: V c

1. Stephen B. Greer reliably reported in Rio de Janeiro after three-stage secret flight last Thursday night which took him from Gaithersburg Airport to Atlantic

VANISHED [continued]

City to Kennedy International. Flight from Kennedy to Rio made solo in jet cargo of Overseas Quick-Freight, Inc.

2. Little Sister investigating Phillip J. Lubin, Johns Hopkins mathematics professor, in connection with Greer case. Lubin missing from Baltimore apartment since Sunday.

While he ate a spare lunch, Ingram sent for and read the Agency dossier on Phillip J. Lubin, and then sat thinking of Lubin and Stephen Greer.

On impulse he placed a call for Senator Owen Moffat of Nebraska, the ranking minority member on a Senate subcommittee of six men, the silent watchdogs of the CIA. Moffat was one of less than a score of men in Washington who knew almost everything about the Agency worth knowing. Ingram reached Moffat in a Senate cloakroom, stated his need opaquely but urgently. Moffat promised to drive to Langley as soon as possible.

It was an hour later when Senator Moffat, a portly, dignified, oddly cherubic man, settled into the leather armchair facing Ingram's uncluttered desk.

"Owen," confessed Ingram, "I'm perplexed and I need your help."

"What's your problem, Arthur?"

"Stephen Greer."

Ingram sketched what had occurred, Nick's memorandum and President Roudebush's rejection of Agency help.

"Rio, huh?" Moffat's eyes lit up. "Arthur, I think exactly what you're thinking, that Steve Greer is in some kind of scandal—money, women, blackmail, sexual deviation, God knows what. I also think that Paul Roudebush knows, or suspects, what this scandal is. Also, in some way we can't fathom yet, the President probably is personally involved. If the facts became known before November second, they might conceivably elect Wolcott, as improbable as that may seem at the moment. Therefore, Roudebush will make every effort to keep the facts hidden until after election day."

"But somehow that explanation doesn't quite fit the President's character," said Ingram.

"You said you needed my help."

"Yes." Ingram gazed through the window. "Suppose, Owen, that the Central Intelligence Agency were to track the movements abroad of Stephen Greer. Suppose the President were to learn of this. And assume that subsequently, perhaps after the election, the resignation of the director of Central Intelligence were demanded. Under these conditions, what might be the attitude of you and your friends on the Hill?"

Moffat crossed his legs and folded his hands at his waist. His smile was a flicker. "Without answering your questions, let me just say that such action by the CIA director is a purely routine in-

telligence operation and would be so regarded—and applauded—by those Senate and House members privileged to oversee the operations of the CIA."

After a silent moment, Ingram said "That's all I need to know."

When the door closed behind Moffat Ingram reached to the intercom box and flicked a switch. "Alice, get me Nick, please."

A moment later a male voice said: "Yes, sir."

"Nick, what was the source of that Greer memorandum you handed me this morning?"

"It came from Lady Y."

After hanging up, Ingram worked for half an hour encrypting a message to "John," the CIA station chief in Brazil.

JOHN
BRAZILIA

Stephen B. Greer reportedly arrived Rio de Janeiro 8/27 by Overseas Quick-Freight, Inc. Need detailed cover Greer since arrival, daily movements. You assigned. Hereby detached all other duties until further notice. Solo job. If help needed, request permission first. Your contact here Vic only, repeat Vic only.

Vic
9/2/2037 Z

In his large, shadowed room in the old Senate Office Building, Senator Owen Moffat sat for half an hour, gazing out the window across Capitol Plaza toward the dome of the Capitol. Then he dialed the congressional switchboard.

"This is Senator Moffat," he said. "Person to person, to Mr. Matthew Silkworth in Springfield, Illinois."

IT WAS SATURDAY MORNING. Jill and I were bent over my desk, trying to piece together the semifinal draft of the President's Labor Day speech.

My green phone buzzed. Grace Lalley put the President on at once.

"Good morning, sir," I said.

"Good morning, Gene," he said. "I'd like you in here. Ingram's arriving out back."

I had only a minute alone with the President before the CIA director entered. Roudebush told me that Ingram wanted to discuss his briefing of Governor Stanley Wolcott in Springfield, Ill., tomorrow. Under the customary agreement between opposing presidential candidates, Wolcott was to receive a digest of world security intelligence.

Ingram saw me the moment he came in the office, and his glance was one of disapproval. "I asked for this meeting, Mr. President, because of our recent misunderstanding over Operation Flycatcher—the Spruance Foundation's work with the young physicists. I thought that this time, before I go to Springfield, we should agree on the precise guidelines for my briefing of the governor."

Roudebush tilted back in his chair. "No problem, really. Stanley Wolcott has a right to know just what we know."

"And that, I assume, includes the Greer matter?"

"Greer?" asked the President in surprise. "Steve Greer is not an Agency concern in any way, shape, or form. He is a private individual whose disappearance is being traced by the FBI."

Ingram was silent a moment. Then he seemed to brace himself. "Mr. President, I think it is time to be completely candid," he said slowly. "I happen to know that the FBI is investigating a possible homosexual relationship between Stephen Greer and one Phillip J. Lubin, a Johns Hopkins professor."

The President rose abruptly from his chair. His face was flushed. "Are you trying to tell me that my best friend is a sexual deviate who has had relations with this Mr. Lubin?"

"I'm merely trying to point out why the Greer matter is of interest to my Agency."

"Your insinuations are nasty," said Roudebush. "I am ordering you, Arthur Ingram, to stay entirely out of the Greer situation."

"That is final?" asked Ingram.

"That is final."

"And I am not to mention the word Greer to Governor Wolcott tomorrow?" Ingram's eyes dueled with those of Roudebush.

"You are not," Roudebush was trembling now. "If Governor Wolcott asks about Greer, you are to tell the exact truth—that Greer's disappearance is not a CIA concern."

BY SUNDAY NIGHT I was beat. I made Jill's apartment in Georgetown at seven o'clock for dinner, Butter Nygaard having decided to stay the night with a "friend."

We had several drinks, picked at the lamb, and then talked for an hour about almost anything but the White House and Greer.

So it was well after midnight when we lay in the narrow bed under the casement windows. The windows were opened wide, admitting a spare, hot breeze. Jill's long hair lay across my chest. Her head was cradled on my shoulder and she was blissfully quiet.

I had to fight to stay awake. I dozed off once and when I came fitfully awake, I could hear the drill of the shower and Jill singing a plaintive mountain ballad about two lovers.

The phone rang. I swung myself out of bed, grabbed the top sheet and draped it around me like a toga.

I said, "Hello." I heard a voice mumble something. It was a word or just a sound, I couldn't be sure. Then the sound of breathing for a few seconds and the line clicked dead. The voice had been unmistakably male.

I went back to bed, unwrapped the

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sheet, and tucked it in at the foot, then lay down and stared at the ceiling. Jill came out of the lighted doorway, naked and naked. She slid in beside me, nuzzled my ear and whispered, "Still love me?" I kissed her, but said nothing.

A man had called Jill and then hung up when he heard my voice.

"What's the matter, baby?" Jill asked.

"Nothing," I said. "Just thinking." I put my arm around her shoulder and she nestled closer. "Jill," I said. "A man just called you."

She moved beneath my arm. "Oh? Who?"

"I don't know. When I said hello, he mumbled something and then hung up like he'd been shot."

"He didn't give a name?"

"No. He obviously had no yen to talk to me."

She leaned on an elbow and peered down at me. "Why do you assume the call was for me? And not for Butter?"

"How many men has Butter got on the string?" I countered. "I thought she was out with that pothead lover of hers tonight."

"You're jealous." She stared down at me with a happy smile. "That call was for Butter. She gets calls every once in a while from some admirer. His name is Nick."

WHEN THE PRESIDENT RETURNED from his Labor Day opening campaign speech in Chicago, I handed him a wire service story somebody had given me.

"Read it, Mr. President," I said. "The big sensation in tomorrow's papers won't be Roudebush or Wolcott. It will be a guy named Kulp from Louisville, Kentucky."

"Kulp?" He was puzzled.

"Hillary Kulp," I said, "chairman of the Wolcott-for-President committee of Kentucky. The wires are carrying full text. It'll open a hornet's nest."

The gist of Kulp's speech was his expressed incredulity that Stephen Greer could vanish in a country boasting the "most complex and sophisticated communications system" in the world, a country where every man lived within a prison of identifying numbers, from social security and credit cards to those of fingerprints, a country of immense police forces, of tracking computers, and "of devices which search, find, and identify."

Kulp excoriated the President for permitting "eleven long days" to elapse without an adequate explanation to the American people. He hinted that the White House was suppressing information obtained by the FBI special task force, then said:

We have heard the rumor from Washington, circulating for days among highly placed persons of the Roudebush administration, that investigation has shown a link between Mr. Greer and a mysterious "Dr. X," supposedly a uni-

versity professor, and that "Dr. X" is nowhere to be found, either. Yet in eleven long days, the White House has uttered not a word about this strange coincidence.

"Kulp obviously has learned about Dr. Lubin from some source," he said. "That speech is poisonous stuff."

"It gets worse," I said. "Kulp was a college classmate of Matty Silkworth, Wolcott's manager. They're still close friends, I'm told."

In the body of his speech, Kulp offered the pretense, always viable political fodder, that he was speaking not as a Wolcott state chairman but as "an American citizen, entitled by law and by tradition to question those who hold the trust of government for a period of four years." He therefore directed a series of blunt questions at the President on the subject of Stephen Greer.

Mr. President, is it true that federal agents have tracked Mr. Greer to an airport outside the United States?

Mr. President, who is the mysterious "Dr. X," what is his relationship to Stephen Greer, and where is he now?

Mr. President, were national security secrets in the possession of Mr. Greer when he disappeared the night of August 26?

Mr. President, what is the Roude-

bush administration hiding—and why?

"A very crafty citizen," Roudebush said. "A very crafty citizen Genêt."

Later Roudebush handed me a sheet of yellow paper on which he had written in pencil:

The White House declines comment on Mr. Kulp's speech, which was replete with ugly and totally unjustified implications of a type inspired by partisan politics. The FBI is continuing to investigate the disappearance of Mr. Greer. When the case is solved, and a full report made to the White House, the public will be informed.

"This won't do the job, Mr. President," I said. "They'll crucify me with questions after I put that out."

"You'll have to do the best you can."

SUSANNAH GREER LAY IN BED, staring into the dark. Sleep would not come. Thoughts of Steve moved through her mind like a train in an endless tunnel.

The bedside phone rang. "Mrs. Greer?" It was a strong, male voice.

"Yes. This is Sue Greer."

"Mrs. Greer, I have a message for you. Please listen carefully. Quote. Dearest Cubby: I am safe and well. I plan to be home within a month. We can celebrate our twenty-seventh early with toasts from the stone bottle. You'll find it in the wine room behind the rack of champagne. Until then, all my love

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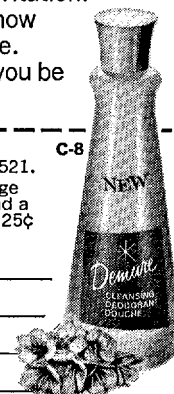
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VANISHED [continued]

to you, Steve. Unquote." Then, the man hung up.

She scrambled from bed, fumbled for her slippers, and raced down two flights of stairs to the basement.

The wine closet stood across the basement from the oil furnace. She pulled the light cord. The shelves were well stocked with gin, whiskies, and rum, and in one corner stood a wine rack with several bottles of Moet Chandon. When Sue reached behind the champagne, she found it.

It was a gray crockery bottle, heavy with dust, and she knew it contained ginger beer. Memories flooded through her . . . their June honeymoon so long ago in Nova Scotia . . . the frame cottage near the shore, and their daily walk to the village of Port Mouton, where they always shared a stone bottle of ginger beer . . . the sharp, refreshing taste . . . Steve laughing and saying that when they were old and doddering, they would celebrate some wedding anniversary with ginger beer.

I REACHED MY DECISION one night in late September, about three weeks later. Unless the "crisis" meeting the next afternoon yielded hard facts, and unless Paul Roudebush took me into his confidence, I was determined to quit as White House press secretary.

I was by now convinced that Paul Roudebush knew the precise facts via his FBI reports. He was, I believed, suppressing these facts in a hope that he could prevent a scandal from erupting publicly until after the election.

I had discussed the whole thing with Jill this night, a Tuesday. Jill and I were still tender if disquieted lovers. The incident of the mysterious phone call had been forgotten. We talked for hours before I told her of my conditional decision to quit. We were sitting on her old, worn couch under the casement windows of her apartment. Her roommate was out, but expected home shortly.

"You're so right, Gene," said Jill. "The President has no business misleading the public like that."

"The public is not my concern," I said. "If Paul wants to kid the public, that's his business. But when he tries to kid me, that's my business."

"Baby," she said, "I don't believe you." She was sweetly forbearing. "Why must you disown your own decent motives?"

No amount of argument could persuade her otherwise. I finally gave up, before Butter returned, and went home with my thoughts.

Next day's UPI story prompted me to talk to the President about quitting.

UPI-131

(GREL)

St. Louis: Stephen

ously missing friend of President Roudebush, apparently met with him in Washington apartment with a university professor for a year prior to his disappearance.

The professor was the "Dr. X" referred to early this month by Hillary Kulp, Kentucky chairman of the Wolcott forces.

Meetings of Greer and Dr. X occurred on the average of once a week at night in the Wilmarth, an apartment on R Street in the northwest section of downtown Washington. The professor rented the apartment under the name of "David Klingman" of the "Crown Arts Co., 939 N. Charles Street, Baltimore." There is no such company and no such address on Baltimore's N. Charles Street.

The professor, a forty-three-year-old bachelor, reportedly left on an automobile tour of western Canada and the U.S.A.

9/29--MJJ304PED

I took it in to him and I remained there as he read it.

"Is there something further, Gene?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," I braced myself. "I'm quitting as your press secretary, Mr. President."

He frowned.

I rushed into my speech. I said it poorly, but the nub got across: He could play games with the public if he wished, but not with his friends who were carrying the burden of the campaign - and especially not with me.

"Just what is it you want to know, Gene?"

"Everything you've learned from the FBI, Mr. President," I said. "I'm entitled to your trust, sir."

"You know that if you resign now," he said, "it could be immensely damaging to me and to the party."

"I do," I said.

Roudebush reached across his desk for a calendar. "September 29," he said. "Will you give me ten more days?"

I was taken aback. The idea of compromise had not occurred to me. "What will I know ten days from now that I can't be told now?"

"Just give me ten days. Is it a deal?" He held out his hand.

I shook it reflexively. "All right, Mr. President."

LARRY STORM WAS WEARY, bone tired, after more than a month of Ajax. Eighteen-hour days and not a single day off yet. Up and down the Eastern seaboard, following, asking, checking leads, some of them crazy, far into the night. The only breaks had been his two trips abroad. At least he had been able to sleep on the planes.

First had come Rio and the surprising trail which led him to the waterfront. There, after two days of digging and disconcerting linguistic skirmishes with his interpreter, came the discovery that Stephen Greer had chartered a boat and sailed from Rio in the eve-

boat, a lobster trawler, 110 feet, over Casa Alegre, and the trawler and her Brazilian master had not been heard from since.

Then came his second trip, the flight to Helsinki, and the painstaking checking of airline tickets out of the Finnish capital. He had tracked his man, then lost him.

Now here he was back on Battle Road, Princeton, in front of the home of Felix Kissich.

Kissich was a Nobel Laureate in physics, a research specialist in plasma physics at Princeton University's Forrestal campus, a refugee Hungarian from the World War II period, a naturalized American citizen, a gentle man of sixty-six years, and a scientist admired by colleagues throughout the world. The only thing that Larry Storm did not know about Felix Kissich was where he was.

Deborah Kissich answered his ring. "Please sit down, Mr. Storm." Her voice was as fragile as she was.

"This isn't easy for me, Mrs. Kissich," he said. "I must ask you bluntly whether your husband returned home from Helsinki and whether he is now at home?"

"No, Felix is not here."

"Did he return here from Helsinki?"

"No," she said.

"Mrs. Kissich, have you heard from your husband?"

FELIX KISSICH had flown from New York to Helsinki on Sunday, September 5, arriving in time for the opening of the International Congress of Plasma Physics on Monday. He checked out of his hotel on Wednesday evening, September 8, a full twelve days before the congress was scheduled to end. Storm had tracked the physicist to Paris, then to Rome and Cairo by commercial airlines, and from Cairo to Cape Town, where the trail evaporated. Felix Kissich had vanished somewhere in the South African city.

"My husband called me one night from Helsinki," said Mrs. Kissich guardedly. "I've received one letter. It came a week, I think, after you were here the first time."

"And the postmark? Where was it mailed from?"

"New York."

"And that is the only communication you've had with him since he left home? No phone or cable?"

"Nothing else," she said.

Larry drew a picture from his jacket pocket and handed it to her. "Have you ever seen this man?"

She studied the photograph, then shook her head. "No, never."

"Does the name Phillip J. Lubin mean anything to you?"

"Phillip Lubin, the mathematician? I've never met him, but I have heard of him."

"Has Mr. Kissich taken these solitary trips before?"

"Yes," she said. "Sometimes. What kind of trouble is Felix in?"

"I wish I knew, Mrs. Kissich."

Three prominent men along the eastern seaboard, a lawyer, a physicist, a mathematician, all acquaintances who had conferred frequently, disappear from their homes within ten days. All fly by staggered routes to South Atlantic seaports. Why?

I WAS FINISHING MY COFFEE and the routine skimming of three newspapers in my apartment on Cathedral Avenue that Friday morning when I received an oblique, insistent call from Princeton.

It was Larry Storm, the Negro FBI agent who had questioned me about Phil Lubin a month earlier. Could we meet at his apartment or mine this afternoon?

I suggested instead that we meet at my place that night.

Jill already was enmeshed in her communications web when I arrived at the west wing office.

Dave Paulick made his explosive entry shortly before noon. He was not unexpected, since I finally had reached him Tuesday and got his promise to call on the President before printing anything. We arranged to have him admitted through the rear driveway, thus avoiding a passage through the lobby where the press camped. He was tanned, buoyant, and pugnacious. I knew he had been traveling, to Rio and God knew where else.

"Reporting in as promised," he said when Jill closed the door behind him.

"You could have given us a couple of hours' warning," I complained.

"Couldn't," he said. "My understanding was that I was to speak to the President. I've got no agreement with press slaves."

"All right." I reached Grace Lalley on the direct line and asked her to inform the President that his excellency, David Paulick, awaited his audience. To my surprise Grace said that I was to bring Dave right in.

We went through the back door, down the inside corridor to the President's office. For once Roudebush's radiant greeting was outshone. Paulick beamed with the triumph of a gladiator who has just polished off both lions and Christians.

"Gene," said the President after the preliminaries, "I think I'd better chat with Mr. Paulick alone."

Once more the door had slammed in my face. I could not complain this time. I had asked for it when I made my ten-day bargain with the President. Still, it hurt, and my feelings were not mollified by Paulick's smug look as I left the room.

It was a full two hours before Paulick returned to the press office. [continued]

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COMING IN SEPTEMBER
COSMOPOLITAN
ON THE NEWSSTANDS
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WHY SOUTHERN WOMEN ARE BETTER THAN NORTHERN WOMEN (AND VICE VERSA). . . . Larry King, a Rhett Butler transplanted to the North, self-sacrificingly records how **you**, a Southern or Northern woman, can capitalize on your attributes and cash in on him.

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PLUS: Mouse into Sexpot . . . Fashion: New Girl at the Office . . . Step Into My Closet . . . Pamela Mason on Marriage . . . **AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!**

BASEBALL'S GORGEOUS BACHELORS

[cont. from page 48]

his retirement. "Baseball is not conducive to lots of dating during the season," says Reichardt. "I like to pick my dates carefully. I'm quite choosy and I like to keep my private life private."

Reichardt, who comes from Stevens Point, Wisconsin, spent the winter finishing his work for a B.A. in history at the University of Wisconsin.

Reichardt likes boating, fine music, art galleries, museums, and good books. He expects his dates to have a good education and come from fine family backgrounds. "During the season, I go my own way. I'm different from most ball players. I like to choose my own

friends. Most of the other players are married. Baseball is really a lonely life if you aren't married."

There would be a houseful of girl volunteers to go Reichardt's way if he would give them half a shot. But this young man is hard to get close to. He wants very much to be married, but he also wants his wife to be his intellectual equal as well as emotional companion. Strict homebodies need not apply. Horn-rimmed glasses and a small collection of English literature or Greek poetry might help. Rick has \$200,000. Not just *any* old literary lioness will get her hands on that. ■

VANISHED

[continued]

The change in the man was extraordinary. He walked slowly over to my desk and stood there uneasily. He was newly humbled.

"Well?" I asked. "When does the *Dossier* shoot the works?"

He shook his head. "It doesn't."

"What! Why not?"

"You'll have to ask him." He tilted his head toward the President's office. "I won't be bothering you. I'm turning the *Dossier* over to my assistant. I need a vacation."

"Vacation!"

"Ask The Man," he said in a subdued tone. "I'll see you in a couple of weeks. . . . I'll go out the back way."

WITH THAT, PAULICK TURNED and left the room without even his customary parting jest with Jill. She sat mute in her chair, watching his exit, as dumbfounded as I was.

"Well," I said, "how do you like that?"

"Things get curiouiser and curiouiser." She shook her head in wonderment. My direct phone to the President's office buzzed suddenly.

"Yes, dear," I said to Grace Lalley. But it was not Grace. It was the President.

"I want you in here at once," he said. The voice that brushed off my "dear" was harsh. Trouble.

I double-timed it to his office. He was standing by the French doors when I entered. He wheeled and strode toward me. His face was set without a smile. I recognized the signs although I had seen them but infrequently. Roudebush was furious.

"Gene," he said, "will you kindly explain how the Wolcott people learned of our private conversations?"

"Mr. President, I'm sorry, but I don't have the least idea what you mean."

"In thinking back, I find that several items in Kulp's speech undoubtedly came from inside this office. Two things, specifically. The disappearance of Dr. X, as he called him. You learned about the FBI's investigation of Dr. Lubin, and I confirmed it for you. Second, the report that Steve went to Brazil. You knew that too—from Paulick, as I recall."

He flung the sentences at me, each a charge in an indictment, then stood coldly, waiting for my answer.

"Mr. President, I talked to no one about any of that," I said.

"No one! That is patently false."

Then it struck me. My God, I told her almost everything. In the emotional tension of the moment, her name came out involuntarily. "Jill," I said weakly.

He looked sharply at me. "Jill Nichols?"

"Yes, sir. She hears a lot of what goes on here. But she's not a leak."

Words were useless.

here," he said. He flicked a switch on his intercom. "Grace, have Jill Nichols come in right away."

JILL, ENTERING, could have been a college girl on the way to an interesting class. All she lacked were the books in the crook of her arm. She had that beguiling smile and her long hair swayed with her gliding walk. Then she became aware of the President's expression—severe, reproachful—and she looked at us both with wonder.

The President pointed to a chair. "Please, Miss Nichols."

"Miss Nichols," said Roudebush, "there has been a serious breach of confidence in the White House. The evidence indicates that only three people could have been responsible. One of these is myself. Since the disclosure could be politically damaging to me, I'm obviously not the person. That leaves Gene—and you."

"Yes, sir," Her voice, trembling, seemed to issue from a tiny cave.

The President related, quite calmly, his suspicions. Jill's eyes widened.

"Gene tells me he has spoken about these matters to no one but you," said the President.

Jill's brief glance at me was reptilian.

"I don't break confidences, Mr. President," said Jill softly but with exquisite firmness. "I've heard all kinds of secret things around here—missile submarines and radar nets and dismal things like that—but I keep them to myself."

"You have not discussed Mr. Greer, or any of the connected matters with anyone?" pressed the President.

She shook her head. "I have not talked about Mr. Greer to any one." She paused, then added: "Except Butter, of course. I talk about a lot of things, even Gene, with Butter."

With the pronunciation of the name, there came a slow dawning in Jill's look of wide-eyed wonder. And the name triggered a scene for me. That mysterious, late-night phone call. The male voice. "Nick."

"And just who, if you please, is Butter?" The President's expression was one of harassed bewilderment.

"Butter Nygaard," said Jill promptly. "She's my roommate. She smokes pot sometimes."

Roudebush smiled, faintly, for the first time. "Undone by a marijuana smoker, Jill, what does Miss Butter do for a living?"

"She's a paid secretary, kind of an executive secretary, I guess, for the I.C.E.S."

"I.C.E.S.?" repeated Roudebush.

"Yes, sir. The International Cultural Exchange Service. That's the private organization that brings foreign artists and musicians over here, and sends

Roudebush frowned. "And how long has she lived with you?"

"Actually," replied Jill, "I live with her. It's her apartment."

Roudebush suggested that, in view of Jill's position at the White House and the increasing pace of the campaign, it would be wiser if she made other living arrangements at once. Jill agreed.

There was discussion of Miss Nygaard. She obviously had talked directly to the Wolcott people or to someone who had. The method of communication made little difference. The main objective was to plug the leak.

He left his swivel chair and came around the desk to shake my hand. "I apologize, Gene."

"I couldn't blame you," I said.

Jill put out her hand tentatively. The President grasped it and patted her shoulder as well. "No more Butters, Jill," he said. "And no more loose talk."

"From now on," she said, "I'm not even talking in my sleep."

Once outside I told Jill: "Get Butter's office on the phone. I want to talk to her pronto."

She busied herself as ordered. "She's not back yet," she said after a few moments. "Her office says she's due in at National at six thirty-two, Eastern Flight Seven Hundred and Two from Charleston, West Virginia."

"Find out where Eastern Seven Hundred and Two into Charleston comes from."

"Huntington, and before that, Louisville."

"Louisville!" I echoed. Jill's discerning look told me that the same thought hit both of us.

"Butter Nygaard," said Jill softly, and there were small daggers in that whisper.

FLIGHT 702 WAS ON TIME. I glanced through a late *Star* as I waited just behind the grille at Gate 12. Butter came down the ramp stairs about midway of the file of passengers. She wore her hair skinned back in a pony tail. She paused at the foot of the ramp and looked behind her. A man soon fell into step beside her. He was Senator Owen Moffat of Nebraska, a leader of the opposition and a top tactician for Wolcott.

Butter and the senator headed for the cab line. I slipped into my car and followed.

At G Street, Butter alighted with her bag in front of the old Albee Building. She waved goodbye to the senator and walked into the building.

I found the International Cultural Exchange Service listed on the wall directory of the Albee Building and took the elevator to the fifth floor. Searching for 513, I got the wrong side of the hall and 512 instead. A small sign under the number, a metal plate hardly wider than a strip of adhesive tape, read "513." My pulse

VANISHED

[continued]

quickened. I tried the door. It was locked.

I turned to 513 across the hall. Its plaque, proclaiming the occupancy of the International Cultural Exchange Service, was a large one of polished brass. Spruance. Operation Flycatcher. CIA.

THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE entrance had a doorbell. I pushed it twice. The door opened, and there stood Butter in a pink blouse and a corduroy skirt that ended an inch above her knees.

"Haven't you got the wrong girl?" she asked.

"Have you a few minutes?"

"Sure." She looked slightly curious.

"Would you mind telling me what you were doing in Louisville yesterday and today?"

She flared. "Who said I was in Louisville? Just what is this, Cunniff?"

"Butter," I said firmly, "this country happens to be in the middle of a presidential campaign, and I have reports that you've been doing business with Governor Wolcott's top people. Particularly Mr. Hillary Kulp."

She got to her feet and folded her arms across her pink blouse. "You'd better leave."

I arose slowly. "Who's Nick?" I asked.

She was astonished, and then so quickly furious that if she had had an object handy, I believe she would have thrown it at me. She mumbled something. It had the sound of, "get lost"—laced with profanity.

I walked through the outer office and out the door.

Save for several night-watch Secret Service agents and White House police-

men, the west wing was deserted when I returned. I reached the President by phone.

"So it seems apparent," I concluded my report, "that Miss Nygaard has been feeding Wolcott headquarters and, today, probably Kulp in Louisville as well. Also, I think there's a strong possibility that she's an informer for the CIA. Paid by Spruance, and probably directly on the payroll, as well."

"This is simply incredible," he said.

"Do you want me to make some inquiries?"

He was silent a moment. "No, Gene. Let me handle this personally."

LARRY STORM AND I hit it off at once. We had much in common. We were both bachelors of about the same age. Having just turned forty, he was two years older than I. We were about the same height and build, and we had both

MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU [continued from page 110]

and the stifled feeling rose with it. Stripping off his clothes, he lay naked on his bed, breath rasping in his dry throat and aching chest. His heart beat, roared, and thundered, threatening to burst his aching eardrums, while his body writhed in a bath of cold sweat. The five-pointed star upon his breast—the pentagram that marks a *vokodlak* forever after he makes his first kill—glowed for an instant with greenish-white fire.

It was his feet that changed first, his feet that had ached and tingled for the past two days. Somehow, his feet shortened while the silver-gray fur crept across his toes and insteps. The change passed upward, accelerating as it reached his shins and thighs. He felt a pressure at the base of his spine, then a pain like childbirth as his tail forced its way to freedom. He rolled out of the bed, falling on all fours, while his torso grew a silver-gray mantle. It spread in a swift ripple of flesh and fur to his arms and hands. Then, and only then, his face darkened and changed.

Lithe and perfectly proportioned, the great gray wolf shook himself and sprang lightly through the open window. Stalking his way across the neatly mowed, moonlit lawns, he kept to the shadows until he reached the woods at the edge of town. Then, with his red tongue lolling through his long, white teeth, he loped and bounded through the lovely smells of night and trees and moss and startled deer. . .

MALIVA KOVACS bit her lip as she heard the familiar dragging, bumping, scrabbling sounds behind the closed kitchen door. Knowing how he suffered when the Time came, she would have tried to soothe the silver-gray cripple in the kitchen. She knew, however, that any well-meant words would only drive him on to more frantic rage. All she could do was sit and stare at the lighted screen of the silent TV—she couldn't risk a whisper of sound, not on nights like this—and wonder what Jed and Granny Clampett were saying.

She watched the tiny old woman pull a tray of biscuits from the oven. Then Jethro came in, eyes lighting up as he sat down to table. Then Ellic May trotted up, followed by a piglet and a baby raccoon. Then the doorbell rang—but how could the doorbell ring when there was no sound?

Maliva Kovacs sat up, bolt upright, in her chair. It was her bell, not the Clampetts', that was ringing. She walked toward the kitchen. "Bela, try to be quiet," she called softly. "It's probably Mrs. Greenspan trying to borrow something." Then she hurried over to the front window, pulled the curtain aside, and called through the crack. "Please, who's there?"

"Does Arthur Kovacs live here?" asked an unfamiliar voice from the unlighted porch.

"He's not in," Mrs. Kovacs answered quickly.

"My name is Leon Hooper," the stranger explained. "I work with Arthur at Harvest House and I was just driving by. Maybe I can come inside and wait for him."

Maliva Kovacs stared in terror through the narrow slit in the curtains. Arthur was in trouble, she felt sure of it. Why else would someone come from work? Arthur would lose his job and sit at the table, head in hands, worrying about the payments. The finance company would repossess the TV. Maybe the police would even come and take Arthur like they took Papa. Maybe they would take her and Bela. . .

"Sure, you can wait," Maliva Kovacs said placatingly. "But I can't let you in. I was just waxing the living-room floor."

"Well, I don't mind waiting on the porch," Hooper said amiably. "I like the night air."

"Oh, no, that wouldn't be right," she said quickly. "Go around to the side of the house and use the kitchen door."

Hooper headed down the narrow path, edged with petunias and dusty miller. He reached the door, turned the knob, and walked into the kitchen. The crippled gray wolf that was Bela Kovacs crept toward him, wagging a hypocritical tail. "Hello, Arthur," Hooper said imperturbably, "I thought you were out."

The wolf's spring was awkward, pitifully awkward, but he knocked Hooper down. Then it was easy. Afterwards, Maliva Kovacs burned what was left in the basement furnace before she mopped and waxed the kitchen floor. Then she went back to the living room, turned on the TV, and settled down to watch *The Late Show*.

Arthur, who returned at four A.M. with a brace of rabbits in his jaws, never knew that anything had happened. He wondered briefly at his brother's lack of appetite; then, as dawn arrived, he writhed through the change, showered, dressed, and headed for the bus stop. When he reached Harvest House he went to Leon Hooper's office, having made his decision to confide fully in his new-found friend. But the personnel director wasn't there that day, or the next, or the next.

He waited patiently for his friend to return, but gave up hope when he heard that Hooper's name had been placed on the list of missing persons. "What a pity!" he remarked at the dinner table, telling his family of Hooper's strange disappearance. "He was such a sweet old man."

He was, wasn't he, Bela answered, smiling.

been the small men—at six feet even—on our college basketball teams, he at Howard and I at UCLA.

I assumed that Larry had come to talk about some aspect of the Greer case.

"Gene," he said finally, after we had exchanged some small talk. "I've been working the Greer case for five weeks, and not once in that time have I seen a single report of another agent. For the first time in nineteen years, I'm working blindfolded."

"How does that differ?" I asked. "How do you usually work?"

"Hell, on other cases I've spent two or three hours every morning going over the reports of a dozen agents before I left the office. Every investigation follows that routine. But not Greer. On Greer, I'm shut out. If it's The Man's order, O.K., fine. But suppose it isn't? If not, I think he ought to know what's going on. Somebody in the Bureau could be double-crossing Deskowicz in an attempt to elect Wolcott. That's hard to believe, but it's possible."

"And so that's why you came to me?" I asked.

He nodded. "I've never before talked about a case outside the Bureau. But this involves the top man. If the President is being had, he should be warned."

"This may seem strange to you," I said, "but I haven't been cut in on the Greer case. The President takes the position that if I don't know anything, then I won't be tempted to mislead the press."

I told him, honestly enough, that my own theory about the Greer case was almost totally conjecture.

"I suspect that Greer and Lubin are probably fags, even though that knocks hell out of my judgment of men. But yet, if they are, why did both take off at the same time—or maybe even go someplace together? That seems to be the most stupid thing they could do."

Storm shook his head. "They didn't go together. Greer went to Rio de Janeiro. That's not where Lubin went."

"No?" I waited expectantly.

But Storm simply studied me.

"Look," I said. "You tell me everything you know. If it hits me as it apparently has you, I take the story to the President tomorrow. I will tell him without giving my source. If he demands to know, I will tell him only on condition that he won't reveal your name and that there will be no interference with you at the Bureau, and no reprisals."

"O.K.," he said. "it's a deal." He appeared to be relieved. "To begin with, your friend Lubin went to Africa—to Angola."

"Angola?"

"Yes, to Luanda."

"I'll be damned."

"And do you know where Kissich went?"

"Kissich. Who's Kissich?"

"Felix Kissich, the Nobel prizewinner. He is a research professor in plasma physics at Princeton. He disappeared too, on September eighth, from an international meeting in Helsinki. We don't have two missing persons, Gene. We have three."

THIS WHOLE SCENE seemed weird to me. Here sat a special agent of the FBI, unfolding his story, like a mystery writer, to an aide of the President.

"You know something?" asked Larry after a pause. "Kissich is the main clue."

"How so?"

"This Kissich probably knows as many Soviet scientists as any Westerner. For years, he has promoted an exchange of ideas and social contacts with them. He's been in and out of the Soviet Union so many times, he might as well be a diplomatic courier."

"But there's another thing about Kissich. He's a peace disciple who believes the Soviets are ready and we're not. He believes, very deeply and passionately, that the Russians are ready to make book that would end war in our time—a permanent *detente*, the diplomats call it. He thinks the Russians want to settle now—but that his adopted country never will agree in his lifetime."

"If that's true," I said, "he's mistaken. Every year we make some new accommodation with the Soviets."

"Right or wrong, Kissich has had enormous influence on both Lubin and Greer. I'm sure those weekly meetings with Lubin were study sessions. I must confess I can't explain why Kissich wasn't present. The meetings, I think, were preparing Greer for the big step."

"All of which brings me to my hunch, and here's what I think the pitch is, Gene. These three guys are heading for Russia. They sailed secretly, after reaching the ports by devious zigzag routes, and I'm convinced that they boarded one of those large Soviet oceanographic ships in the South Atlantic. I think they are on their way now to the U.S.S.R."

Steven Greer a possible defector! Too many pieces did not fit, too many bridges thrown across unknown rivers.

"Detections are out of style," I said. "Hell, man, there's no need to defect these days. A man can argue his piece in either country."

"I'm convinced that Deskowicz is deceiving the President. Just how it started, I'm not sure. My guess is that the minute Pete heard about Greer's disappearance, he smelled something fishy and clamped a tight lock on all his agents to make sure none of us knew too much."

"I can't buy defection with Steve," I said. "I can't buy it with anyone else, sure, but Steve, no."

I thought for a while. Larry's theory was fantastic, and yet . . . what did I really know? If someone had suggested yesterday that the CIA's Arthur Ingram was monitoring the White House through Butter Nygaard, I would have said the idea was a lunatic one. For all of my supposed intuition about government and politics, I was lost now.

"So you want me to tell the President the whole story?"

"I do," he said.

I SAW THE PRESIDENT at nine-fifteen that morning. Even compressing the story, I talked for a half hour. He listened without interrupting me, grave and troubled.

"Gene," he said when I finished, "that is an incredible story. Precisely who was your source for it? I want to question this person myself."

"He told me I could give you his name," I said, "only if we have your pledge that no one else will learn of it."

"Of course," said Roudeshush. "You have that pledge."

"In that case, his name is Larry Storm, one of the FBI special agents who has been on the Greer case since the start."

Jill spent a hectic Saturday following a barely endurable confrontation with Butter Nygaard. Jill moved her things to a temporary room in the apartment of two other White House secretaries. Then she came to my place that night for a late dinner. We dissected Miss Nygaard to the marrow, but shied away from any talk about the White House. Both of us still felt the sting of the President's reprimand.

I excused myself several times and tried to reach Larry. Like Dave Paulick, Larry Storm had simply disappeared. As far as I was concerned, we now had five missing persons.

HE WALKED ACROSS THE DECK, scanning the horizon to the east. Spray burst over the rail with each lunge of the ship. Westerly winds lashed at the stern in gusts. The *Pedro Alfonso* was being driven faster than the eighteen knots that the compact motor freighter had maintained on the long reach from Rio de Janeiro.

Bill Hughes, looking where the captain pointed, saw the shape, a burr on the dirty wool of the sky.

"That's it," said the captain in Portuguese. "Six days. We'll be at anchor offshore in another hour."

Hughes took a pair of binoculars from the chart table and focused the lenses as he sighted over the bow. He was a chunky man with black hair, green eyes, and a scalloped nose that had been broken twice.

"I can see the volcano now," said Hughes, laughing. Nothing was visible.

"No jokes after we anchor," said the captain. "No islander

will put out in a small boat in this weather."

"Then I'll use one of the *Pedro's* lifeboats to go ashore."

"You'll go alone. That island has a couple of drownings every year." The captain's tone was one of rebuke. This American was a madman, he thought. Who else would pay \$28,000 U.S. cash, in advance, for a roundtrip voyage to the remote island of Tristan da Cunha, more than two thousand miles from Rio? And who else would brave the surf on Tristan's treacherous rocks?

The island gradually took form during the next hour. At last appeared the tiny settlement of Edinburgh, a cluster of about seventy-five stone, thatched-roof cottages on this most lonely and isolated of British islands.

Hughes speculated as the freighter drove through the seas. Would he find his man here? If so, would he be a lone visitor and what would his explanation be? And why the silence of Tristan's radio, the island's only link with the world save for the occasional mail ship out of Cape Town?

HUGHES CLIMBED OVER THE RAIL and the gunwale of the lifeboat, seated himself on the middle thwart, and grasped one of the oars. The boat lowered with a creaking of the davits. After fifteen minutes, he had covered less than half the distance to the narrow mouth of the harbor. A tall man with a bullhorn watched him from the beach.

"Pull to your right, quick," he called.

The warning came too late. The bow of the wooden boat struck a great lump of volcanic rock and the following wave twisted the boat parallel to the stony beach. Hughes was flung into the water about fifteen yards from shore. The next wave carried him shoreward like a bundle of wash.

The tall man in the windbreaker ran toward the water. Hughes felt an arm go about his waist and found himself being dragged high on the graveled beach.

"Well, how do you feel?" asked the stranger. "You could have been killed."

The man led Hughes up to a gray lava road, stepping carefully on the slippery rocks. Hughes could see an ox pulling a cart loaded with stone.

The islanders were gathered in a meadow several hundred yards from the harbor. All faced the newcomer.

"Tristan's welcoming committee," said the tall man. He put out his hand. "Call me Joe."

"All right," agreed Hughes.

"And what's your name?" asked the man.

"Bill Hughes. The Bill is real. So is the Hughes—Joe."

"What's your business here?"

"Government business. The United States."

"Oh," said Joe. He looked unimpressed

guest down the road to the knot of

"This is Mr. William Hughes from the United States," explained Joe to the crowd. "He will be our guest for a time."

Hughes waved a greeting. "Hello, everybody."

A SHORT, SCRUBBY MAN stepped forward. Black-gray whiskers draped his face like Spanish moss. A front tooth was missing. He wore a heavy blue sweater and short-visored woolen cap.

Joe introduced him to Hughes as Norman Green, headman of the island. Hughes knew the name from his reading. Green was a descendant of one of the first families to settle the island a century and a half ago.

"Norman," said Joe in a low voice, "you tell the *Pedro* that Mr. Hughes is staying on indefinitely and that they're to sail back to Rio. O.K.?"

"O.K.," said Green.

"Let's go, Hughes," Joe grasped the protesting newcomer firmly by an arm. "We're going to my place."

They walked in silence.

"Where's Steve Greer?" asked Hughes.

Joe did not break stride. "I ask the questions here."

Joe's stone cottage nestled in a hollow. A stone chimney framed one end of the house. The interior was fashioned from the driftwood and fittings of vessels wrecked long ago. Planks lined the walls. Beams, painted green, supported a wooden ceiling. The furniture was crude, a few wooden chairs, a pitted table with sawhorse legs, and two single beds. The fireplace was bare.

"All right," Joe said. His long face was unsmiling. "Who do you work for?"

"As I said, the U. S. Government."

"My guess would be you work for the CIA. Am I right?"

"Not allowed to answer that question. Let's just say that I'm personally acquainted with Arthur V. Ingram."

"I want to know just why you're on Tristan da Cunha."

"Well, let's see. I am looking for a prominent Washington attorney named Stephen Byfield Greer. I'm supposed to talk to him and his friend Phil Lubin from Johns Hopkins. It seems they maintained a little R Street menage in Washington for about a year, and then, presto, they both take off. Finally discovered that he sailed from Rio on a trawler called the *Casa Alegre*. No idea where. But, at last, the *Alegre* put back into port, and I got the captain snookered. Tough man, but corrupt. The captain tells me he took Mr. Greer to the island of Tristan da Cunha. So, hearing that, I hired me a small but fast one, the *Pedro Alfonso*. Well now, warden, how about telling me something? What in the hell is Mr. Joe anonymous doing here, keeping house for Greer and

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Lubin? And by whose orders and for what purpose?"

JOE STRETCHED HIS LEGS and appraised his guest anew. "You're a cool one, Bill. I like you, even if you are a non-stop yakker. I'll leave the talking to you. As for me, I'm under orders and I obey them."

"Dull kind of life," said Hughes brightly. "So what am I supposed to do now?"

"First," said Joe, "you are not to speak to anybody on the island except headman Norman Green and myself. Second, you are not to take notes of any kind. Third, you are not to enter the radio shack. That's the house with the antenna on it. Fourth, you are not to approach a house known as the Mabel Clark. If you're wondering, it's called that because it was built from salvage of a sailing vessel of that name wrecked here a century ago. Number five; if a ship should pass or approach the island, you are not to signal it in any way. Otherwise, the island's yours. Of course, we'll be watching you."

"Thanks a lot. It's not a fair trade. I tell you the works. You tell me nothing."

"That's the way it is."

ARTHUR INGRAM LINGERED over his coffee. Then he switched on the overhead indirect lighting, adjusted his reading glasses, and once again went through the deciphered file.

FROM: John, Rio
To: Vic, Washington
Captain of *Casa Alegre* knows Greer whereabouts. Asks \$1000. Request permission for payment.

9. 26 1803 Z

FROM: Vic, Washington
To: John, Rio
Granted. Hereafter use station funds as necessary. Urgent.

9. 26 1849 Z

FROM: John, Rio
To: Vic, Washington
Casa Alegre captain says he transported Greer to island of Tristan da Cunha. My evaluation 1 A. Can charter 18-knot motor vessel to Tristan. Instructions.

9. 27 1411 Z

FROM: Vic, Washington
To: John, Rio
Proceed Tristan at once. Report soonest.

9. 27 1501 Z

FROM: John, Rio
To: Vic, Washington
Sailing Tristan within hour. Charter cost, round-trip, \$28,000. Ship *Pedro Afonso*, Brazilian registry. *Pedro's* radio not reliable. Will report on arrival island via Radio Tristan. Sailing time, five days. Expect my report night of Oct 3 latest.

9. 28 0915 Z

Ingram tapped his glasses on the little stack of messages. Here it was Monday

night, October 3, and not a word from John. He was twenty-four hours past the promised deadline.

Ingram sorted out his thoughts. Lady Y's cover had been blown by Gene Culligan. While Culligan had made no specific charge to Miss Nygaard, he obviously believed she worked for the Agency. For one thing, he mentioned the name "Nick" to her. For another, the next day, Saturday, Culligan's secretary, Jill Nichols, moved out abruptly from Butter Nygaard's apartment.

What of Stephen Greer? Actually, Ingram knew very little, even now. The presidential prohibition had forced him to forgo a general Agency investigation. Ingram had dared use only John, but John, his best South American agent, had been hobbled. Ingram knew, via Miss Nygaard, that Dr. Lubin had vanished from Baltimore after almost a year of secret meetings with Greer in an R Street apartment. Ingram also knew that Roudebush withheld contents of FBI reports from his own staff, and that Gene Culligan had threatened to resign over the issue, then agreed to hold off for ten days. What could that mean?

All of this, Ingram recalled, had impelled him to suggest that Miss Nygaard accompany Moffat to Louisville to brief Hillary Kulp for his television speech.

There was a rap on the door. It was the young duty officer.

"Radio Tristan does not answer, sir. Communications thinks Tristan may not keep a twenty-four-hour watch. Of course, we could try through the South Africans. I'm told Cape Town has daily contact with Radio Tristan."

"No," Ingram shook his head. "Perhaps tomorrow."

After the duty officer left, Ingram sat thinking for a few more minutes, then dialed the number of Senator Owen Moffat's home.

A half hour later the Senator entered the office.

"Any word from Roudebush yet?" asked Moffat.

"Not a word," said Ingram. "And the silence does not fit his character. I'm worried about the Kulp speech."

Moffat nodded. "I thought it would be unwise to go off half-cocked when there was a real possibility of something definite. It's arranged for Thursday night. It all depends on you—and John."

"That's my trouble, Owen. I haven't heard from John. He's far overdue." He described the Agency's unsuccessful effort to make contact with Radio Tristan. "I'm in the dark. I don't like it."

"Tristan," mused Moffat. "I've read everything I could find about that island since you told me. It makes no sense at all. Why would Greer and Lubin go to some God-forsaken hunk of lava a thousand miles plus from nowhere?"

Ingram made a cautioning gesture with his glass. "Careful, Owen. We have no knowledge that Lubin went to Tristan da Cunha. In fact, we have no idea where he went. All we know is that he disappeared, and that the FBI is following him as closely, apparently, as it is Stephen Greer."

"The fact is, Arthur," Moffat said, "that we know very little for certain. In such a situation, Stanley Wolcott must protect himself against all possible developments. I've talked this over carefully with Matty Silkworth and we are agreed. There is only one weapon that can give Wolcott full protection now."

"And what is that?"

"Your resignation," said Moffat.

"Resign!" Ingram looked like a man singled out for human sacrifice.

"Yes, resign," repeated Moffat.

"I'm afraid I don't understand," said Ingram.

"Stephen Greer, entrusted with vital security information, has abandoned his country. In this crucial situation, President Roudebush relies entirely on the FBI, a largely domestic agency, to trace his friend. Why hasn't he enlisted the services of the one organization, the Central Intelligence Agency, equipped by statute and by long experience to gather information outside the United States? Is Paul Roudebush endangering the security of the United States just to protect a friend and win an election? As a man of honor, you can do no less, Arthur, and you know it."

"Does Stanley Wolcott know of this suggestion?" asked Ingram.

"No, the idea was worked out by Silkworth, Kulp, and me."

INGRAM AROSE and walked to the long window overlooking the parapet of the building and the dark hills.

"All right, then," he said. His voice was flat, dry. "I'll resign this week. I leave it to you and Silkworth as to the day and hour."

Moffat left the room across the soft, deep carpeting. In the brightly lighted corridor, he turned to look at the director's yellow door and the discreet, black sign: "7D60, DCI."

This yellow door had opened on the eyrie of Washington's second most powerful official. It had closed on a man dispossessed. Politics had its brutal, naked moments. Moffat shrugged. He had done what he had to do. Arthur Ingram was in his pocket.

Arthur Ingram lifted the jangling receiver of his green phone, the direct, scrambled line to the Defense Intelligence Agency at the Pentagon.

"What do we know about a couple of Communist ships, one of them a Soviet cruiser, heading toward the island of Tristan da Cunha in the South Atlantic?" asked the DIA chief, Lieutenant General Marvin Palfrey.

Tristan. The name jarred Ingram.


[continued]

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Stephen Greer on Tristan. The island's radio either out of commission or pointedly refusing to receipt for messages. No word from "John."

"Do these ships fit any pattern you have in your shop?" asked Palfrey.

"No," said Ingram.

"Don't you think we'd better scrape together whatever we have?" asked Palfrey. "I'd like to be prepared in case the President calls. It smells a little strange. Don't you think so, Arthur?"

"I do. Tell you what, Marvin. Let me think about it and I'll get back to you."

Ingram sat for half an hour, puzzling, piecing, conjecturing. Greer on Tristan. Tristan's radio down. "John" where? A Russian cruiser and Chinese freighter steaming toward Tristan da Cunha.

Then he placed a call to Senator Owen Moffat and reached him after a few minutes of search at the Metropolitan Club.

"Owen," said Ingram, "I think we'd better have another talk immediately. I've changed my mind as to motive on the basis of new information. Owen, I think Greer is defecting."

JILL WALKED BACK TO HER DESK and slumped in her chair with her arms on the typewriter.

"Gene," she said in that soft, small voice, "if I weren't so beat, I'd cry."

I understood. We had been forced to lock the door of the press office soon after lunch that afternoon. Our little command quarters for official information had become a beleaguered outpost, under attack from the press and completely cut off from the commander-in-chief.

I walked over to Jill and kneaded her shoulder. She gave me a frail smile. "Thanks," she said. "Sometimes I wish Steve Greer had never been born. How many more days of this I can take, I don't know."

We were sinking under a deluge of demands. Somewhere, somehow, a dam had burst. The city was awash with rumors.

ABC wanted confirmation of a report that a Russian armada was suddenly loose in the South Atlantic. NBC had its own rumor: that Hillary Kulp, in his all-network speech for Wolcott tomorrow night, would charge that Greer and Lubin had defected to Russia. The Los Angeles Times wanted to check a rumor that an FBI agent named Larry Storm had been fired because he knew too many scamy details about the Greer case.

A White House staffer who normally had quick access to Roubush called to complain that he could not reach the President.

My first order from the President's and then it bristled. "The President wants you to come

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in," Grace informed me without her usual banter.

The President looked up from some papers as I walked in.

"I'm sorry I haven't been available, Gene," he said. "Too much happening too fast. I wanted you in here because our friend from across the river—Arthur—will be here in a minute."

THE DOOR OPENED and Grace Lalley nodded to the President. Arthur Ingram entered.

"Good afternoon, Mr. President," said Ingram. He was pressed to crisp edges, his tie neatly knotted above a collar clasp, his expensive cordovans gleam with polish.

"I would prefer to speak to you in private, Mr. President," he said.

"Oh, don't mind Gene," said Roudebush. "He's become my liaison man on policy concerning the Agency."

"This is a personal matter," said Ingram.

"I think it best that Gene remain. You said your business was urgent?"

"Yes, sir," Ingram folded his arms as if to fortify himself. "I am here, Mr. President, to tender my resignation."

"I see. As of when, may I ask?"

"Effective tomorrow."

"May I have the reasons, please?"

"Certainly," Ingram was rigid in his chair. "You have specifically forbidden my Agency to join the search for two prominent missing persons, despite the fact that one of these men has been outside the United States for some time and despite the fact that both men possess information vital to the security of this country. This exhibits a distrust, a contempt—or a fear—of my Agency that completely vitiates my usefulness."

"And why do you think I issued that order?" asked Roudebush.

"I have no certain knowledge. I can only speculate. The director of Central Intelligence obviously is not in the confidence of the President. His value, therefore, is minimal. If you need a further reason for my resignation, you have just stated it."

Roudebush studied Ingram for a moment. "Arthur, do you have a promise from Governor Wolcott that you will be his CIA director in event of his election?"

"What Governor Wolcott may or may not intend is for him to say."

"Arthur," he said after a time, "we both know that your resignation at this time would be highly embarrassing to me politically. The campaign is entering its final phase." He glanced sharply at Ingram. "What you forget is that the President of the United States also has a forum. And, believe me, in this case, I'd use it. I don't think the American people would look favorably upon a man whom the President accuses of recruiting young scientists as spies, a man who plants a secret agent in a

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country club frequented by officers, both civilian and military, of his own government, or a man who goes to the incredible length of monitoring the private conversations of his President." The President hesitated briefly, then erupted.

"Damn it, Ingram, do you realize what it means to place your own President under secret surveillance? Perhaps the real curse of our system is that you can't be hung for it."

Ingram rose. He bowed, so slightly that it became a gesture of contempt.

"With your permission, sir," he said. "Further talk would be futile."

THE PRESIDENT STOOD UP.

"Arthur, if you announce your resignation tomorrow, you will make yourself a fool before the whole country. You've completely misjudged the nature of the Greer case. For that, you cannot be technically blamed. I had intended to keep you fully informed, but I changed my mind when I learned about the young physicists and Operation Flycatcher. I learned last week that for more than two years you have surreptitiously monitored my private conversations via Miss Nygaard. And then, to my amazement, I learned that you had defied my specific orders by dispatching one of your agents to the island of Tristan. That was outrageous insubordination. It might have had disastrous effects too—if it weren't for the diplomatic skill of several men. Steve Greer and Secret Service Agent Don Sheehan among them."

Ingram was a man transfixed.

"And so, Arthur," Roudebush said, "I merely advise you that I think—although I cannot be positive about it—that you will be making a tragic personal mistake if you announce your resignation tomorrow."

"I intend to take that risk," Ingram bowed. "May I leave now?"

"Of course."

Without a word of parting, Ingram squared his shoulders and left the room.

Roudebush shook his head. "Well, thank God that's over with. I want that conversation recorded at once, Gene."

He flipped some pages on his desk calendar. "Gene, I want to apologize to you. You've been loyal and you've done a good job under tremendous handicaps. I wanted to level with you from the start, but I just couldn't. The nature of Steve's mission was too delicate. The smallest leak might have meant catastrophe."

"It hasn't been easy," I said.

"There are several things you should be thinking about. I want to present a group of people—including some foreigners—at a regular press conference in the State Department auditorium. Can we get all television networks on

short notice, say, two or three hours?"
"Yes, sir. We'll just get under the wire. Hillary Kulp's big explosion is slated for tomorrow night, all networks, paid time by the Wolcott committee. It's costing them more than three hundred thousand dollars."

Roudebush looked quickly troubled again. "I hope," he said slowly, "we'll be able to save the governor's people some money."

JILL AND I ARRIVED at the press office at the ungodly hour of 6 A.M. We were sitting on my desk, sipping our coffee, when Grace Lalley rang with the cryptic advice that we should go to the back lawn "to see something interesting."

We joined Grace on the lawn. Three Secret Service men appeared from the center of the house beneath the balcony. Then came the President, holding the arm of a woman who was chatting away at him. She was Susannah Greer, hatless, in a trim, chic, blue trench coat.

Roudebush wore a snap brim hat and tan topcoat with upturned collar.

A few seconds later, we heard the clattering grind of a helicopter. It swung clumsily over the Ellipse and then headed toward the White House with its big rotary blades thrashing.

The chopper settled down, rattling and crackling like pots and pans in a suddenly disturbed kitchen, just a few yards from the President. The first man out the front hatch was Don Sheehan. He waved triumphantly at the President, then pointed behind himself. The second man was Stephen Greer, dressed in a sport shirt, an old leather jacket, and khaki pants. He jumped down, grinned, and held his hands up in a boxer's handclasp. Sue Greer ran out to meet him and they threw their arms around each other. Then Steve, with Sue clutching his arm, walked over to greet the President.

The third man, little to my surprise by this time, was Phil Lubin. He was smiling, diffidently. Then followed three men I recognized as members of the Army Signal Corps unit attached to the White House. The last two men to leave the helicopter were Larry Storm, wearing a windbreaker and denim trousers, and big Dave Paulick.

The helicopter lifted off the lawn and thrashed away. Almost at once another chopper lumbered toward us across the Ellipse. The second copter disgorged six more men. One of them appeared to me to be an Asian and one was a burly fellow with long arms and a craggy, sunburned face: Barney Loomis.

The new arrivals walked in single file toward the Roudebush welcoming party. There was a great deal of bowing and handshaking, and then the President led them all into the White House. The chopper then took off.

"And just what was that all about?" asked Jill.

"Operation Alpha," said Grace Lalley. She smiled, then walked back toward her office.

The President called me at about eight o'clock and instructed me to go ahead with the requests for network time. I spent an hour on the phone, but the magic word "Greer" vaporized all network resistance. We could have had the entire afternoon if we had wanted it. Then, at 9:30 A.M., I made the announcement to the press.

The State Department auditorium began filling just a few minutes after the news hit the UPI and AP city news tickers. The UPI rang bells and triple-spaced the item for emphasis:

CORRESPONDENTS:
WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY EUGENE R. CULLIGAN SAYS THERE WILL BE A MAJOR NEWS BREAK ON THE STEPHEN GREER CASE AT NOON. PRESIDENT ROUDEBUSH AND "OTHERS" WILL APPEAR AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT AUDITORIUM. TO BE TELFVISED LIVE. ALL NETWORKS.

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What follows is my transcript of the press conference:

THE PRESIDENT: Ladies and gentlemen of the press, my fellow Americans, and those across the seas who are watching on television or listening by radio . . . I come before you today with a proud and happy heart. My good friend, Stephen B. Greer, has returned safely from a mission on behalf of his country and of the whole world. He comes home, not with a tidy conclusion, but with a beginning. It is a venture which has filled my dreams for many months, a beginning for you, for me, for all of mankind. But it is, I warn you, only a start. There is much work yet to be done, much patience, tolerance, and forbearance to be exacted from each of us. But it is a beginning of great promise, and I exult in it.

A few words of digression here for my good friends of the various media before me. One of your fraternity, Mr. David Paulick, editor of *D.P.'s Dossier*, recently came to my office. I learned that by dint of hard, unrelenting pursuit of the news, he had discovered a great deal about what, for many months, a number of us in the administration have called Operation Alpha. I told Mr. Paulick the entire story and asked him to withhold publication for ten days or so. He promptly agreed. Mr. Paulick is a hard bargainer. He demanded his *quid pro quo*. I decided to fly Mr. Paulick to the scene of Operation Alpha so that he might get an accurate firsthand picture. He was accompanied by Larry Storm, a special agent of the FBI, who has been

commissioned to help gather material for an official history of the project.

Now I think you should hear the story of Operation Alpha from some of the men who labored in it. And to start that story, I introduce to you my old and good friend, Mr. Stephen B. Greer. STEPHEN B. GREER: For me, Alpha began one night three years ago in New York City at a meeting of the board of directors of the World Law Fund, of which I'm a member.

The Fund is dedicated to establishing a world of law to replace the violent, chauvinistic disorder which now marks the affairs of nations—and has for centuries. At our board meeting we heard a number of speakers discuss the problem of expanding the rule of law into new areas. One of these men made an eloquent appeal on the banning of nuclear weapons. His theme was that the very existence of these monstrous killers—even if not used—sabotaged the goal of a world governed by law instead of force and violence. A psychotic or rash leader could wipe out half of civilization in a single afternoon, law or no law.

I was intrigued and deeply moved. As a result, Dr. Kissich and I met a number of times that year in New York City. Gradually, he persuaded me that the nuclear bomb must go.

I had a long talk with President Roudebush at the White House on the subject. He said in substance: "All right, Steve. But how do we go about it?"

There followed two night meetings at the White House of the President, Dr. Kissich, and myself. We concluded that the statesmen of the world were hobbled by an almost infinite number of

pressures—national pride, fear, or for a high treachery, and many, many more.

So we three arrived at what I could best call a dry-run plan. Dr. Kissich set to work. He talked first with some of his fellow Nobel Prize laureates and then later with many men and women in wider circles of atomic science, always, of course, in strict confidence. He went to many capitals, both in Communist and non-Communist countries, and he haunted the international conferences where scientists gathered. All of these men and women joined in a pact and pledged themselves to secrecy. The organization's name was Alpha—for "the beginning"—and it was dedicated to the abolition of all nuclear weapons. Kissich got Alpha members in each of the eleven nuclear nations to nominate two of their number to serve on a drafting committee. After months of probing, he became convinced that an eleven-nation body would be quite unwieldy. So he compressed his search to but five nations—ten delegates, two from each of the big nuclear powers.

That's where I came in. We decided that I would attend the meeting, not as a delegate, but as an unofficial representative of the President of the United States, advising on both political and legal angles.

From the outset, we realized that a major problem would be Communist China. Therefore we decided that, in addition to learning the rough fundamentals of atomic physics and mathematics, I should begin a tutored course in the Chinese language, customs, and policies.

That is the reason I met the famous Dr. X. He is Dr. Phillip J. Lubin of

Johns Hopkins University, one of the dozen ranking mathematicians of the world. Dr. Lubin also has command of five languages, including a fluency in Chinese.

Dr. Lubin and I went to work more than a year ago, meeting weekly on Wednesday nights in a Washington apartment. Even my wife did not know where I went Wednesday nights.

Felix Kissich finally wound up his preparations in April of this year. He had his ten men lined up, two atomic scientists of highest reputation from each of the five large nuclear powers. He and Dr. Lubin were to represent the U.S. members of the Alpha Society, with me as unofficial White House consultant.

Frankly, we all had a domestic political problem. How could we carry out a secret venture of this global extent and importance in the midst of an American presidential campaign? If the news of Alpha leaked out, would the undertaking flounder in a political cross-fire, or would the President be accused of some flamboyant gesture for political advantage? How could I, with my known relationship to the President, just drop out of sight without my disappearance becoming a political issue? I urged the President at a White House meeting in early July to postpone the entire project until after the election. Kissich argued that there would never be a right time.

The President agreed with Kissich, making the vote two to two. And, as you all know, in case of a tie, the President seldom loses. So we decided to go ahead.

And now, since I've talked long

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VANISHED

(continued)

enough, the story will be taken up here by my friend and tutor, Phil Lubin.

PHILLIP J. LUBIN: Perhaps you're wondering, why all the secrecy? Well, we all agreed that the inevitable debate and uproar might shatter our chances for success before we really got started. In this country, there were certain extremists to contend with. And the foreign scientists, almost without exception, refused to attend unless they had positive assurances from President Roudebush that the Central Intelligence Agency would in no way be involved. The CIA has a very poor image abroad. So, President Roudebush gave his word of honor that the CIA would not be brought into the operation.

The President in return exacted a pledge from the other three heads of state that none of their intelligence agencies would place the conference or its auxiliary preparations under surveillance.

After much searching for a place to meet, we finally settled on the island of Tristan da Cunha, deep in the South Atlantic. This is a small, remote, volcanic British island with about 250 inhabitants and a dependable radio facility. Tristan has no airfield and no harbor except a tiny one for small boats. Normally, Tristan da Cunha's contact with the outside world is confined to a mail ship from South Africa which calls six or seven times a year. So, Tristan suited our purposes exactly, and it was agreed upon as the site.

The three Chinese delegates reached Tristan by flying to Buenos Aires, then chartering a motor vessel for the voyage to the island. The Russians came to Tristan on a Soviet submarine which made most of its South Atlantic trip submerged. The French and British contingents were brought to the island on a British destroyer. We Americans traveled by individual routes.

Preliminary talks got under way on Tristan September 8. We made some progress, but not until Kissich arrived September 17 did the negotiating pick up speed.

The main problem which dogged us was that of international inspection of nuclear warhead dismantling. It was Mr. Bernard Loomis of the Educational Micro company who provided the breakthrough. For some years, working under an Atomic Energy Commission contract, Mr. Loomis' research division had been trying to develop a device which could detect the existence of nuclear weapons in stockpiles or in final process of assembly. In other words, no explosion would be necessary to activate a monitoring instrument many hundreds or thousands of miles away.

Late in September, Barney Loomis himself came to Tristan by orders of President Roudebush. He read off a list

pinpointing every atomic arms plant by the new discovery. This was a clincher, for the list tallied with the knowledge that each scientist had of his own country's atomic sites.

That roadblock behind us, we finished our work just two days ago, on the evening of Tuesday, October 5. All ten members of Alpha signed the agreement, Felix Kissich last at 6:50 P.M. Tristan time.

I shall now, with the permission of President Roudebush, read the agreement.

AGREEMENT OF TRISTAN DA CUNHA

1. The basic charter of the United Nations shall be amended to forbid the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons, of whatever type or size, by any nation, group, or person.
2. All existing nuclear weapons anywhere in the world shall be destroyed on or before one year after the ratification of the substance of this agreement by the United Nations.
3. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall elect a committee of fifteen members, including one national from each of the nuclear powers and no more than one member from any nation, which shall be empowered to carry out the provisions of Point Two (2) of this agreement by such methods, rules, and regulations as the committee may devise.

Originally we planned to announce the Tristan agreement simultaneously in Washington, London, Moscow, and Peking. But at the last minute, because of threatened premature disclosure and some other factors, we decided to fly many of the participants directly to Washington for this press conference. Members of the Chinese delegation, plus Dr. Kissich and one Russian, are today en route to Peking. Nationally mixed groups are also en route to Moscow and London from Tristan.

I think that's all. Most of us are sleepy and ready for bed. My part in Operation Alpha has been the most satisfying experience in my life. THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dr. Lubin. On behalf of the American people, I thank you all.

And that is the basic story of Alpha.

When the new Congress meets in January, I intend on the first day to send the Tristan text to the Senate and ask that body for a vote of confidence in the objectives of Alpha. I will, as you realize, be President until January 20, regardless of the election's outcome.

Late last night, I called Governor Wolcott in Springfield and told him substantially what you have heard today. The governor questioned me closely and I believe that my answers were candid. He said that while he could not commit other leaders of his party, he personally would support the spirit, if not the exact wording, of the agree-

ment of Tristan. He will make a full field later today.

I salute the governor as a great American and as a wise citizen of the world. His assent means that, whatever else happens to the Agreement of Tristan, it will not become a matter of bitter dispute between the two major party candidates for President.

And so, my friends, there you have Operation Alpha, a venture conceived in the brilliant mind of a Nobel laureate in physics, a saga which began at Burning Tree, a quest which I hope with all my heart will not falter until the last nuclear weapon has vanished from this earth.

I would ask every one of you listening and watching today, in whatever land, to search your minds, your hearts, and your souls, and then join the noblest of all crusades—the preservation of the human race.

Alpha is our beginning.

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE fresh, bright days of June that seem as newly scrubbed as a schoolgirl in early morning. A breeze stirred the trees, a cardinal sang on a limb still damp from the night's cleansing rain, and the air felt cool and light to the skin.

Larry Storm, Dave Paulick, Miguel Loomis, and I were about to have lunch in the Burning Tree Club's dining room, which overlooks the first fairway where Steve Greer began his extraordinary quest ten months before. We sat next to the open windows and watched the day dance about us.

We were in a buoyant mood.

The United Nations early that week had guaranteed the future of the Agreement of Tristan, endorsing it by an overwhelming vote. Machinery also was set in motion to amend the charter of the U.N., and a committee had been elected to devise rules and regulations for the dismantling of all nuclear weapons by October 5, the first anniversary of the signing of the Tristan pact.

I had a personal reason for enjoying this day, although the President had not included it among the causes for celebration. Storm, Paulick, and Miguel Loomis were all coming to the apartment tonight for Jill's twenty-fifth birthday party. All of them had attended our wedding on November 3, the day after Paul Roudebush's reelection, when Miguel served as my best man.

"And who's going to write the real inside story of Alpha?" asked Miguel.

"Dave's the writing man," I said. Paulick looked pleased. I paused. "But I've got the material."

I BEGAN WRITING the first chapter of *Vanished* the next night and finished exactly one year later.

EUGENE R. CULLIGAN
Washington, D.C.

June 20

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